THE NEW MEANS TO HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION IN BENGAL

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with a foreword
by
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ORIENT BOOK COMPANY
CALCUTTA 12

THE NEW MENACE

TO

HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

IN BENGAL.

A CRITICISM, A REJOINDER AND A STUDY

BY

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WITH A FOREWORD

BY

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CALCUTTA: FINE ART PRESS.

1935.

PREFACE.

In November 1933 a Conference was called to meet at the Government House, to discuss certain educational questions. It assembled on the 23rd, 24th and 25th of the month and mainly occupied itself with a discussion of matters affecting the secondary education and particularly the high schools of Bengal. The departmental NOTES circulated in connection with the Conference contained the following observations and proposals with reference to high school education and the reorganisation of the high school system in the province.

"(2) High School Education—There are at present in the province approximately 1200 high schools distributed haphazardly. The existence of many is precarious; their value doubtful. The mistaken policy of multiplying institutions, without ensuring their academic efficiency or their financial stability, has been disastrous. It is clear that to attempt to provide facilities for high school education in every village is an impracticable ideal which even the richest countries in the world do not attempt to carry out."

* * *

"It will have to be realised, and the realisation implemented in practice, that in order to provide facilities for the child who chooses to continue his studies beyond the middle stage and who resides in an out of the way place, the practice of attaching hostels to high schools must be extended. Boys must be prepared to reside away from home.

"There are at present in high school classes in Bengal approximately one hundred and four thousand students. In all probability 400 schools properly organised and controlled, would ensure far more efficient education than is at present possible. The following is the type of high school that is envisaged.

Number of pupils in schools, 260, distributed as follows :—

Class X	60
Class IX	60
Class VIII	70
Class VII	70

There would be two sections in each class and the school would therefore, consist essentially of eight classes. These two sections might correspond to the classical and modern sides of English Secondary schools."

* * *

"It is probably not desirable to allow high schools to conduct middle or primary school classes The high school stage is not an altogether artificially created division. It corresponds to certain definite physical and psychological changes in a boy."

* * *

"There is little to gain and much to lose by extending a high school downwards. Where high schools at present have middle and primary classes, these latter are only too often regarded as financial feeders to the matriculation and other upper classes and insufficient attention is paid to the welfare of younger children."

* * *

"The scales of pay suggested are as follows :—

	Rs.
Head Masters	100-5-150
Assistant Hd. Masters	75-5/2-90
Ten Teachers	50-5/2-75

Average Salary Bill, Rs. 875. The current expenditure budget of such a school would be as follows :—

	Rs.
Salaries	875
Provident Fund	55
Apparatus	25
Library	15
Servants	30
Games	10

Contingencies	10
Repairs and Reserve Fund	25
Boarding Stipends	130
Total	1175 a month.

"The income for such a school would consist essentially of fee income together with Government grant."

* * *

"It is suggested that fee rates normally to be charged should be Rs. 4 in classes X and IX, Rs. 3 in classes VIII and VII. The present system of free seats should be abolished and there should be a definite scholarship examination at the end of the middle stage upon the results of which scholarships to the extent of 25 per cent. of the number of students reading in the high school should be allowed. In addition 10 per cent. of the students in any high school should be given boarding stipends of Rs. 5 a month to enable them to pay their hostel dues. The fee income on such a system from the school contemplated would amount to Rs. 675 a month. It would be seen therefore that for such a school a grant of Rs. 500 per month would be necessary from Government.

"The total grant required from Government therefore for high school education would be Rs. $500 \times 400 \times 12 = 24$ lakhs per annum. The present expenditure of Government upon high school education is—

1. Non-Government schools	8,91,117
2. Government schools	6,83,907
Total	15,75,024

This is the amount budgetted for the current year and is considerably less than what was previously spent.

"Assuming that under any recognised scheme Government wished to maintain a number of model schools in which higher paid teachers were employed and better facilities were provided, we might anticipate an annual expenditure in higher education of Rs. 27 lakhs ; this would allow of the retention of 20 Govt.

or special schools at an annual net cost of Rs. 21000 each. The carrying out of such a policy would have to take place over a number of years.

"The following shows the type of expenditure programme which might be adopted :—

Government grants required.

	Rs. (in lakhs)
1935	16
1936	17
1937	18
1938	19
1939	21
1940	23
1941	25
1942	26
1943	27
1944	28

Thus in ten years' time the realisation of the scheme would be financially possible at an increased cost to Government of approximately Rs. 13 lakhs."

Now it could be seen that, despite obvious attempts to sugar bitter pills, the proposals were founded on three basic ideas, viz.,

(1) That four hundred high schools were enough for Bengal, in other words, nearly 66 per cent. of the existing high schools were superfluous and might well be given a general notice to quit.

(2) That the high school stage should be entirely dissociated from the middle stage. Their continuity, organic and local, should be broken up, so that boys in the one might not naturally and easily pass on to the other, and Matriculation might be a remoter goal for a limited few.

(3) That the future high schools of Bengal should be organised more on residential lines as boarding institutions :

"Boys must be prepared to reside away from their home".

As such, the proposals constituted a direct attack against the existing high school system and stood for curtailing severely the present scope and facilities for high school education in Bengal. The apprehensions that they raised could only be equalled by the surprise that they sprung on the public. It was difficult indeed to believe that an administration which only in the last decade was inveighing against the first non-co-operation movement and repeatedly pointing out its blighting effects on the high schools of Bengal, could come forward so soon with a scheme of striking down hundreds of high schools, and that at a time when many of them, adversely affected by the movement, barely recovered from the shock. Besides, 'axing' high schools and making them much fewer in number, the scheme would accentuate, if not create, a new social menace by producing hot house plants on a large scale, instead of boys growing in their natural environment rooted in their home and family. Part I of the book is a criticism of the basic ideas of the suggested scheme and policy.

But this formidable attack against the high schools was launched not without a devastating criticism directed against them by the Eighth Quinquennial Review on the progress of education in Bengal published just before the Education Conference. The Review marked not only a definite change in the official attitude against the high schools but there was much in it that pointed unmistakably to the genesis of the proposals outlined in the NOTES. Indeed, the new scheme proceeds from the attitude, arises out of the ideas, and is the direct outcome of the conclusions presented by the Review. An examination of the proposals laid before the Conference, therefore, requires, an investi-

gation of the charges preferred against the high schools by so deliberately prepared a document as the Quinquennial Review—a review, again, that has been welcomed by the Government Resolution on it as a 'very interesting' product. Hence Part II of the book.

Again, such destructive criticism of the high schools and of high school education in this country seeks to exploit some of the prevailing thoughts of the hour and tries to take advantage of the popular agitation for technical and vocational education. That has necessitated the examination of the question whether higher secondary education, at any rate that which is meant here for boys up till the close of the fifteenth year, stands in inimical relation to any progressive scheme of technical or vocational education; and how, again, the latter has been developed in England and America, and whether at the sacrifice of secondary education or not. To deal with the questions a wider survey has been undertaken though within a small compass in the first four chapters (Chapters XIII, XIV, XV and XVI) of Part III.

All these chapters (Chapters I to XVI) were published as a series of articles in the daily 'Forward' shortly after the Conference. They have been revised and are republished with necessary changes and some rearrangement too. The three concluding chapters, however, are altogether new. While in the last chapter we have reiterated the point of distinction of the existing system and indicated what can ensure its progress and save its reputation, in Chapters XVII & XVIII we have pointed out what in our opinion are *the real but unattended* defects of our high school education—defects that have long demanded remedies, of course beyond empirics' endeavours, but surely within the powers of real ministers of education to administer.

One word more: we have not attempted to answer any

undisclosed charges or criticism against the high schools nor have we anticipated any. Lest it be said that we have not correctly represented official views we have not been sparing in giving references.

So long as the official views stand as they do and the new scheme and policy are not definitely abandoned there is obvious necessity of such publications in defence of our *alma maters*. Let us hope abler and better informed men will come forward to stand by these institutions and no educated Bengalee will forsake the cause of the school to which he owes his early preparations for higher education.

BARNAGORE
October, 1934.

AUTHOR.

FOREWORD.

The author has requested me to write a foreword to his booklet and I have much pleasure in acceding to his request.

The first delusion we have to dispel as regards English Education in Bengal is that it owed its origin to the British Government, and that it was more or less thrust down our reluctant throats. The British Government through the Committee of Public Instruction certainly came to control its policy and dictate its programme but the anxiety for English education originated among a section of the people of this country. It is only necessary to quote here the opinions of some of the eminent authorities on this subject.

Alexander Duff in the course of his evidence before the Parliamentary Committee of 1853 said :

"English Education was in a manner forced upon the British Government; it did not itself spontaneously originate it."

Arthur Howell in his 'Education in British India,' observes :

"It is one of the most unintelligible facts in the history of English education in India, that at the very time when the Natives themselves were crying out for instruction in European literature and science and were protesting against a continuance of the prevailing orientalism, a body of English gentlemen appointed to initiate a system of education for the country, was found to insist upon the retention of oriental learning to the practical exclusion of European learning."

Arthur Mayhew, an English educationalist, disposes of the above erroneous notion curtly thus :

"The movement for Anglicisation originated in Missionary and Hindu quarters before Macaulay had begun to sharpen his pen and select his epithets in the land of 'exile' whose culture he was to traduce. And it was fostered by Hindu support for many years after he had left India. Far more important than that 'master of superlatives' was Ram Mohan Roy, whose antecedents, career and aspirations won for him friends among reformers and missionaries alike, and enabled him to unite these bodies against the common enemy."

Bishop Heber in his Journal records :

"Ram Mohan Roy, a learned native........remonstrated against the system (Brahminical Education) last year in a paper which he sent me to be put into Lord Amherst's hands, and which, for its good English, good sense and forcible arguments, is a real curiosity as coming from an Asiatic."

C. E. Trevelyan in his 'Education in India' (1838) records that the Hindus, long before England had learned to do anything of the kind, had founded, a college at Calcutta by their "own voluntary contributions, for the instruction of their youth in English literature and science."

The second delusion we have to dispel is that Ram Mohan Roy and the Anglicists ignored altogether the claims of the vernaculars.

Ram Mohan knew well that if his countrymen were to be enlightened the vernacular must be the medium. Hence he not only conducted a periodical in Bengali—Sambad Kaumudi, (1821)—for the propagation of his views but began his crusade against *suttee* also in a Bengali pamphlet.

Macaulay also, notwithstanding his avowed object to promote cultural conquest through English education, makes the prophetic observation :

"To hire four or five people to make a literature is a course which never answered and never will answer in any part of the world. Languages grow. They cannot be built. We

are now following the slow but sure course on which alone we can depend for a supply of good books in the vernacular languages of India. We are attempting to raise up a large class of enlightened natives. I hope that 20 years hence there will be hundreds, nay thousands of natives familiar with the best models of composition, and well acquainted with Western Science. Among them some persons will be found who will have the inclination and ability to exhibit European knowledge in the vernacular dialects. This, I believe to be the only way in which we can raise up a good vernacular literature in this country." (Trevelyans's Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay. Vol. I, page 411.)

Macaulay's prophecy was amply fulfilled, as we find that within 20 years of his famous minute and even earlier Krishna Mohan Banerjee, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Akshoy Kumar Dutta, Rajendra Lall Mittra and others began to produce works of merit in Bengali and these came to be widely read.

With the above salient facts in the back ground, we are in a more favourable position to do justice to our author's admirable brochure: THE NEW MENACE. Our author very aptly quotes from Sadler Report his text:

"In education there will always be need for the zeal and independent effort of private teachers and for the enterprise of private schools. But except where there are large endowments or where high fees can be charged, secondary education cannot be provided adequately, or be maintained in due efficiency, without large subsidies from the public purse."

On the above our author comments,—

"And if, in putting in a strong plea for a new and healthier system, the Commission generally observed 'Government will have to pay a larger portion of a substantially larger expenditure if the evils we have described are to be mended and the reforms we have advocated are to be carried through,' they were definitely of opinion that 'if the system of secondary

education in Bengal is to be made thoroughly efficient an annual expenditure over above fees of not less than Rs. 150 lakhs will have to be nndertaken in the future.' We observed before that in this province the total expenditure on secondary education did not come up to 150 lakhs even in 1931-32 and that 67 per cent. of that expenditure again was contributed from fees. But the Bengal authorities who contribute less than 16 per cent. of the cost of secondary education for boys appear to be determined to win the war for efficiency without what Matthew Arnold has termed 'the sinews of war'."

It is a sad commentary on the present system of administration that an Indian Minister of Education drawing Rs. 64000/- a year "a higher pay than that drawn by the Prime Minister of England, considering that the latter has to submit to a much higher rate of income tax," should bring forward a scheme calculated to strike at the root of higher education in Bengal. Here is distinctly discernible the voice of Jacob but the hands of Essau. Such a scheme can only betray crass ignorance of the situation in Bengal. It is well known that in the Dacca Division especially in Vikrampur as also in parts of 24 Parganas and Khulna etc. we have the largest number of high English schools mostly unaided. I have been lately going through a portion of Khulna near Rampal which is inhabited by the most backward classes of *Namsudras*, as also through Batbunia and Bajua inhabited by the equally backward *pods*. They are crying themselves hoarse for aid to the high English schools which they have started; but the inspecting officers not only turn a deaf ear to their piteous appeals but actually create difficulties in the way of recognition on the ground that they are very inadequately staffed, and have no libraries worth speaking, and no reserve funds etc., etc. In every civilised country, the state comes forward with liberal pecuniary help in such cases. But here the inspectors throw cold water over the local schemes. What else can these

educational officers do when very inadequate funds are available for promoting education ? Again, out of the total grant for Education, a rich slice is eaten up by the extravagantly paid staff with their T. A. and halting allowances. Exactly a quarter of a century ago (1908) Mr. (now Sir) Devaprosad Sarvadhikary observed from his place in the Bengal Council :

"Inspection may be, and no doubt is, highly necessary for sound education, but inspection-ridden education that is primarily starved can never prosper, and it is a root question whether more money ought not to be spent on the articles to be inspected than on the inspecting machinery."

"Inspection on inspection and inspection of inspection is apt to end in shrimps and water weed floating in the improved milk supply, as happened in the case of the fabled royal consumer of old."

Again, it should be borne in mind that while the grants-in-aid are still subject to a 10% cut, the pay of these costly officers has been restored to the previous scale i.e., the 5% cut has been done away with.

In the circumstances our author aptly says :—

"Yet the representatives of that provincial administration, which has borne the smallest share of the burden of secondary education in the whole of India even in the years of 'responsible ministry' and whose contribution from public exchequer at the end of the last quinquennium (1931-32) even could not exceed 16 per cent. of the total expenditure on secondary schools for boys, now come forward to suggest that, in the face of the long-standing and growing public sacrifices in the cause of secondary education as evidenced by the contribution of 67 per cent. of the total expenditure from fees instead of 63-9 in 1927, eight hundred out of twelve hundred high schools must suffer to be degraded to the M. E. Standard and the remaining four hundred must be reduced to the position of semi-government institutions with all non-official enterprise and management practically ruled out."

And our author's protest is not a stray note of dissent. It is gathering and will continue to gather swelling echoes as attempts are made to cut down even the existing facilities for education. At the recent All-Bengal Teachers' Conference Mr. A. F. Rahaman, Vice-Chancellor of the Dacca University in the course of his presidential speech took occasion to observe :

"Admitting for a moment that all these defects due to swollen numbers are true, it ought to be our endeavour to see in which direction reforms should be attempted. Somewhere it has been suggested that the real remedy lies in a curtailment of numbers by withdrawing facilities for education." "If it were a remedy it would be acceptable, but may I suggest that the remedy proposed is more drastic than the malady. The curtailment of facilities that already exist may produce undesirable repercussion."

Apart from secondary education with which our author has concerned himself, our college and post-graduate education also is mainly due not only to the initiative of private enterprise but also to its heavy sacrifices. As the Vice-Chancellor in his last convocation address very pathetically said :

"During 1934 the University had a total income of about 27 lakhs of rupees, out of which Rs. 18,65,000 or a little more than 69 per cent. represented the income from fees and other sources, Rs. 3,65,000 or nearly 14 per cent. was derived from interest on endowments, and Rs. 4,68,000 or about 17 per cent. received from Government."

It is thus evident that Government contributes only 16 per. cent. of the total expenditure on secondary education and only 17% of that on post-graduate education i.e., 83% to 84% of the expenditure is shouldered by the people themselves in these spheres. And yet Sir Henry Cotton, who was a pro-Indian administrator with sympathy for Indian aspiration which is beyond cavil and criticism, coolly

and condescendingly remarked "the people of the country enlightened and educated by ourselves"! (Preface to New India, 1886.)

I need not pursue these points further. Our author has thoroughly studied the subject and brought to bear upon it the considered opinions of educational experts in England and America. I can commend this opportune and thoughtful publication to the careful consideration of all those who are interested in the cause of education in Bengal.

University
College of Science
June 5, 1935.

P. C. ROY

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PART : 1

THE PROPOSED SCHEME EXAMINED.

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW MENACE.

BENGAL'S GREATLEAD IN HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION-HER PRIDE AND HER OFFENCE.

It was before a learned and distinguished assembly, though there were only a few non-officials, if any, to represent the interests of the ill-fated high schools, that the death-knell of higher secondary education in Bengal was sounded with a solemn and striking ceremony. There were, in the opinion of the authorities, too many, far too many, high schools in Bengal—institutional provisions for higher secondary education in tremendous excess of the requirements of the province. The U. S. A. may have "twenty-odd thousand high schools" for a population of 124 millions. England and Wales with a population of 40 millions may have 1765 higher secondary schools eligible for grant and recognised as efficient, "besides a large number" "which are not grant-aided and have not applied to the Board for recognition as efficient." But how can Bengal, an outlying province of India, be permitted to run 1200 high schools for a population of more than 50 million souls without producing "disastrous" results ? And how can she desire to add to their number without being guilty of the absurd aspiration of having a high school "in every village"? Hence the results of the singular voluntary sacrifice made by the people of Bengal for generations past—sacrifice that has ensured the phenomenal progress of her high school education, as compared with the other Indian provinces,

despite waning official encouragement and niggardly support from the provincial exchequer—have to be largely undone. It was the proud boast of every true-born Bengalee that in secondary education Bengal could say that among the Indian provinces she was the very first, and the rest nowhere. If six years ago (1927) the province, which could not claim even one-sixth of the population of India, had as many as 1003 out of 2372 high schools for boys in the whole of India, to-day she has no less than 1096 high schools for boys alone, in spite of her being the greatest sufferer from the recent economic distress. But it is remarked that "the existence of many is precarious and their value doubtful." How can the institutions of a poor country, reared on a voluntary basis, with no compulsory rates to fall back upon, no statutory guarantee of state-aid to look to, have plenty of resources in all cases? and how can unpretentious temples of learning have any value to men accustomed to dream of luxurious establishments? To say, however, that "the existence of many" (in the sense of a large number) "is precarious," is to raise a very different question, viz. how many high schools in Bengal have gone out of existence during the last decade the set-back of 1921 notwithstanding. Whatever may be the historical feature of the middle schools, rarely, indeed, has Bengal suffered her high schools to die. For, however much one may choose to declaim it, high education has ever been her absorbing passion and she has never been satisfied with any middle standard and the wastage involved in passing through an unduly long primary and post-primary course. Her Government was prepared to contribute the least for secondary education, but she was determined to find the money even putting herself on a starving ration. The very report which might have given the cue to the new-fangled Government policy—the Interim

Report of the Simon Commission—observed :

BENGAL'S DISTINCTION AS THE HARTOG COMMITTEE FOUND IT.

"The proportion contributed by Government funds has increased in every province and in two, Madras and the Punjab, it has more than doubled in the last ten years. In the latter province this is due very largely to the policy of establishing Government High Schools in backward areas. In the United provinces, and Assam, about half the total cost of secondary education is now met from Government funds. On the other hand, fees, in Bengal, bear almost two-thirds of the costs ; in Madras and Bombay, half ; in the United Provinces, Burma and the Central Provinces, only a little over a fourth." [a]

* * *

"Fees meet 63·9 percent of the total cost in Bengal and only 26·2 per cent. in the Central Provinces." [b]

The following table taken from that very report [c] will show the very large difference between popular and governmental contributions towards secondary education in this province, as compared with those in the other provinces; and, it has to be remembered, there were six years of reformed government before 1927.

Percentage of contribution by sources to direct expenditure on secondary schools for boys by provinces.

Province	Government Funds. 1927	Local Board Funds. 1927	Fees 1927	Other Sources 1927
MADRAS	23·4	8·1	52·2	16·3
BOMBAY	29·1	3·3	50·0	17·6
BENGAL	16·2	3·2	63·9	16·7
U. P.	51·3	7·4	28·8	12·5
PUNJAB	45·6	13·2	31·7	9·5
BURMA	34·9	22·8	26·3	16·0
B. & O.	27·2	15·2	46·3	11·3
C. P.	48·4	18·5	26·2	6·9
ASSAM	46·2	9·4	37·7	6·7
BRITISH INDIA	33·7	9·9	42·3	14·1

(a) *Hartog Report, p. 102.*
(b) *Ibid p. 103*
(c) *Ibid p. 102*

DECREASING CONTRIBUTION FROM PUBLIC SOURCES. YET PROPOSALS FOR REDUCTION OF PRIVATELY MANAGED SCHOOLS.

That was the position, again, six years ago but how has it altered now ? The Resolution on the last Quinquennial Report on the progress of education in this province sums up the position thus :

"The total expenditure on secondary education which amounted to Rs. 1,07, 37, 075 in 1926-27, rose in 1931-32 to Rs. 1,22,01,808 of which about 18 per cent. came from public sources, 67 per cent. from fees and 15 per cent. from other sources."

It is difficult to say exactly what public sources really denote, but if they include only Government and local board funds then the contribution from these sources must have suffered further reduction. Yet the representatives of that provincial administration, which has borne the smallest share of the burden of secondary education in the whole of India even in the years of "responsible ministry" and whose contribution from public exchequer at the end of the last quinquennium (1931-32) even could not exceed 16 per cent. of the total expenditure on secondary schools for boys, now come forward to suggest that, in the face of the long standing and growing public sacrifices in the cause of secondary education as evidenced by the contribution of 67 per cent. of the total expenditure from fees instead of 63·9 in 1927, eight hundred out of about twelve hundred high schools must suffer to be degraded to the M. E. standard and the remaining four hundred must be reduced to the position of semi-government institutions with all non-official enterprise and management practically ruled out !

CHAPTER II.

A VIOLENT DEPARTURE.

But the proposal to deprive some eight hundred high schools of their present status is not the only scheme of forfeiture that has been placed through the Conference before the country. Application of their property to a different use appears to be necessary as well. When institutions hitherto considered desirable have just come to be deemed undesirable it is only natural that their lands and buildings will also be reckoned fit for appropriation to purposes that the master stroke of a new-found educational policy demands to promote [a]. Many, if not most, of the high school buildings and almost all of those that are under private management were either specifically endowed or constructed mainly out of generous benefactions of the local public made for a definite object viz. advancement of high school education. In every case before recognition was given, at any rate during the last thirty years when these "superfluous" eight hundred institutions came into being, the recognising authority insisted on the provision for necessary buildings before granting the usual permit. But that recognising authority not being a Government department, but merely "a creature of statute", the superior authorities apparently think that no breach of faith will be incurred in putting these high school

A SCHEME OF FORFEITURE PAR EXCELLENCE

(a) With reference to Middle School education the Notes circulated at the Conference observe: "There are at present 1,700 middle schools and, if the high school reorganisation scheme is carried out, 800 high school buildings will be available for middle schools".

buildings to a different use. The newly devised educational scheme, assuredly not being political, need not be inspired by moral considerations either. And hence, in the supremely constructive proposals placed before the Conference, it is assumed with amazing non-chalance that "eight hundred high school buildings will be available" for swelling the number of existing middle schools.

AT VARIANCE WITH PREVIOUS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND FINDINGS.

Four hundred high schools are just enough for Bengal. This is the new inspiration and message of her Education Ministry. Bengal had a larger number of high schools long before the reformed government and the new dispensation of diarchy came into existence—even before she became a Governor's province—perhaps earlier than the dawn of the present century and surely before 1902. We shall not refer to the Education Despatch of 1854 and the significant avowal of Government intention of the day when it asserted that "it is far from our wish to check the spread of education in the slightest degree by the abandonment of a single school to probable decay". Let us not refer to the Government resolution for the appointment of the Hunter Commission (1882) which, putting Primary Education in the forefront of the reference, yet averred that "it would be altogether contrary to its policy to check or hinder in any degree the further progress of higher or middle education." But, it is really remarkable that even the University Commission of 1902 did not consider it worthwhile to cry halt and discourage further multiplication of high schools in Bengal. On the contrary, fifteen years later when another and more elaborate enquiry was undertaken in full view of the fact that "in Bengal and Eastern Bengal the number of high schools was greater than in the rest of India put together", the Sadler Commission could not think of recommending that high schools which number-

ed more than 700 by that time should be reduced to 400. On the contrary they had to note : THE FINDINGS OF THE C. U. COMMISSION

"In our journey through Bengal in the cold weather of 1917-18, we found almost everywhere a demand, often an eager demand, for more high school education.

* * *

At Bankura, for example, in Western Bengal an influential deputation informed us that the middle classes in the neighbourhood are sending more boys to high schools.

* * *

At Dacca the strength of the current now pressing towards high school education is at once felt.

* * *

At Mymensing the volume of Muslim demand for high school education on modern lines strikes the visitor.

* * *

All over Eastern Bengal Muslim boys are showing an increased eagerness for high school training. Those who spoke on behalf of the Peoples' Association of Khulna told us the pressure for more high schools came not only from the middle and upper classes but from cultivators.

* * *

At Rungpore the centre of a wide agricultural district Mr. Aftabuddin Ahmed reported to us a rapid increase in the demand for high school education in that part of Bengal both among Hindus and Mussalmans." [(a)]

In the face of this universal demand the Commission suggested definite means and measures for improvement of the school system, but could not contemplate that the best method of reform should be "whittling away the apex at any level" or a programme of drastic reduction in the number of high schools. Far from giving the verdict that

(a) *Calcutta University Commission Report (1917-19) Vol. I, Ch. VIII pp. 199-203.*

high school education in Bengal must die to live, the Commission upon an examination of even the undesirable institutions and their dark features and defects came to the conclusion :

> "In education there will always be need for the zeal and independent effort of private teachers and for the enterprise of private schools. But, except where there are large endowments or where high fees can be charged, secondary education cannot be provided adequately, or be maintained in due efficiency, without large subsidies from the public purse." [a]

THE C. U. COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS: HOW REFORMED BENGAL FOLLOWED THEM.

And if, in putting in a strong plea for a new and healthier system, the Commission generally observed "Government will have to pay a larger proportion of a substantially larger expenditure if the evils we have described are to be mended and the reforms we have advocated are to be carried through," they were definitely of opinion that "if the system of secondary education in Bengal is to be made thoroughly efficient *an annual expenditure over and above fees of not less than Rs. 150 lakhs* will have to be undertaken in the future."[b] We observed before that in this province the total expenditure on secondary education did not come up to 150 lakhs even in 1931-32 and that 67 per cent. of that expenditure again was contributed from fees. But the Bengal authorities who contribute less than 16 per cent. of the cost of secondary education for boys appear to be determined to win the war for efficiency without what Mathew Arnold has termed "the sinews of war."

But, if the Education Ministry of the Government of Bengal could not profit by the recommendations of the Sadler Commission, other provincial governments have

(a) *Calcutta University Commission Report (1917-19) Vol. I. Ch. VIII p. 225.*

(b) *Ibid, Vol. V. Ch. LI p. 259.*

not failed to do so, as the following table will sufficiently illustrate :

Percentage of contributions from Government funds to direct expenditure on secondary schools for boys (a)

PROVINCE	1917	1927	Progress
U. P.	28·1	51·3	+ 23·2
ASSAM	26·3	46·2	+ 19·9
MADRAS	11·1	23·4	+ 12·3
B & O.	16·9	27·2	+ 10 3
BENGAL	11·7	16·2	+ 4·5

All-India figures for the last quinquennium when available, let us hope, will enable us to revise our judgment.(b) In the mean time let us proceed with the examination of the specially prepared scheme that, upon mature consideration of the recommendations of the University Commission, has after all been put forward to improve high school education out of at least two-thirds of its existence, of course, on a ten-year-plan of measured generosity.

(a) *Hartog Report, p. 102.*

(b) *The Tenth Quinquennial Review on Progress of Education in India* shows that in Bengal expenditure from Government funds on secondary schools for boys in 1931-32 was Rs. 20,70,043 only out of the total expenditure of Rs. 1,31,07,917, and hence it went below 16 p.c.

CHAPTER III.

A QUIXOTIC AND CRIPPLING SCHEME.

FROM THE SADLER COMMISSION TO THE HARTOG ENQUIRY.

We have seen that almost up till the inauguration of the Reforms no body could be so reactionary as to suggest that better facilities for high school education were unnecessary in this province, and that, instead of adding to the number of high schools, severe curtailment of their number was urgently called for. In the quinquennium that began with the enquiry of the Sadler Commission, the story of secondary education in the province was marked by the dual feature of evergrowing unpopularity and rapid passing away of the M. V. Schools, and steady increase in the number of high schools, mainly through the progressive conversion of the middle schools into high schools, notwithstanding the increased cost of tuition in the latter. Inspite of the recommendations of the Sadler Commission the reformed Government would not contribute their quota, would not come to aid and assist properly the expansion and improvement of the secondary education, though in their estimate it was "approaching the point of break-down". But the people's sacrifice not only kept it going but helped it to expand even in years of economic depression. In fact, in 1919-20 Government had to admit that, although they could do very little towards the improvement of high school education, school fees showed a marked increase. To the Education Department that would watch and

control more than aid and encourage, it seemed curious indeed that here was a branch of education that would not break-down according to official prophecy and prosper even in adversity. "More curious", observed the Seventh Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in Bengal (1922-23 to 1926-27), "is the history of the high schools. Between 1916-17 and 1921-22 their number rose by 180, although the pupils diminished by more than an eighth. The increase in schools was the result and symptom of the growing desire for English secondary education and numbers would also have risen were it not for the non-co-operation movement ; in fact, till 1919-20, numbers did rise. Now that the movement has ceased to exert any appreciable influence on education, the number of schools and the number of pupils have both increased in proportion."[a] That this increase in the number of high schools was a part of the general increase in the number of secondary schools all over the province and did not take place at the cost of the middle schools was also admitted, and it had to be recognised that, "while education has become more expensive, parents are prepared to pay a rather larger part of the expense than before."[b]

While popular sacrifice and efforts were making so much headway, Government support to education in general continued to be far from encouraging. It transpired as a result of the Hartog enquiry that "between 1922 and 1927 the percentage" of total provincial revenue "spent on education everywhere increased except in Madras, Bengal and Assam"[c] and although at the very inception of the reforms Bengal suffered the imposition of three new taxes on the ministerial assurance that much of their pro-

(*a*) *p. 39.* (*b*) *Ibid p. 47.* (*c*) *Hartog Report p 254.*

ceeds would go to expand the beneficent activities of her transferred departments, *she was found to be the only province in the whole of India where the percentage of total revenue spent on education actually decreased by 2·3 per cent. between 1922 and 1927.* [(a)] The people of this province however succeeded in maintaining her reputation where her Ministry of Education failed egregiously ; for, after all, the report of the Hartog Committee contained this significant admission :

"In every province, except Bengal, public funds meet more than half the cost of education, in seven provinces more than two-thirds, and in one province more than four-fifths." [(b)]

But "fees contribute proportionately more than twice as much in Bengal as in any other province." [(c)]

THE NEW COUNSEL OF DESPAIR.

While such was the general position, the burden of the people of Bengal in the matter of secondary education in particular continued to be more and more heavy. The percentage of expenditure on secondary education from Government funds steadily declined since 1922 ; yet the voluntary sacrifice of the people not only made up for it but continued to foot a larger and larger bill of cost for secondary education. That however could not save the situation from the official point of view. "*To make all the schools financially stable, a sum of about Rs. 40 lakhs is necessary. From this point of view, the problem is insoluble.* Even with the deprovincialisation of all government schools, government will not be able now *or in the future* to provide for all high schools in Bengal the financial basis for an efficient education." [(d)] Such was the

(*a*) *Hartog Report p, 254.* (Since 1927 Government expenditure on education has further decreased in Bengal from Rs. 1,47,94,686 in 1927 to Rs. 1,44,46,851 in 1932, that is by Rs 3,47,835.)

(*b*) *Hartog Report p. 258.* (*c*) *Ibid p. 257.*

(*d*) *Eighth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in Bengal (1927-32) p. 44.* (Italics ours.)

despairing conclusion of the Education Department presided over by a "responsible" Minister and assisted by highly paid officers who are never in doubt about their own efficiency. And this conclusion of the first reforms regime stands embodied in the latest Quinquennial Review for the years 1927-32; while, in the very decade ending with 1932, the growth of expenditure on secondary schools, dependent mostly on popular contribution in the shape of fees etc., has been as follows:

1922	Rs. 1,02,84,804
1027	Rs. 1,28,34,655
1932	Rs. 1,48,50,159

Even on the supposition that the Government has contributed about 8 lakhs towards this growth of expenditure, it will be seen that in one decade alone *the people have contributed voluntarily nearly 40 lakhs towards it.* It was impossible indeed to characterise it as simply 'curious' as the official review did five years ago. New feelings must arise. A truly national and responisible government would have felt proud and entertained nothing but the deepest admiration for such popular sacrifice for education. But in the present authorities in charge of education in this province, curiosity of the last quinquennium could only yield place to hostility towards such popular endeavour. Despairing of keeping pace with popular aspiration and knowing not how to guide such enthusiasm, they can only cry halt and attempt to confine it within concentration camps. Bengal supports "the largest number of privately managed and often unaided institutions." That is her greatest offence and she can be adequately punished only by wiping such institutions out of existence altogether, even if some of them may be the very best of the high

schools from the educational point of view, and can well serve as examples to the much vaunted models furnished by the Government high schools in the province.

ARE FOUR HUNDRED SCHOOLS SUFFICIENT FOR BENGAL ?

But before we proceed to the question of control, let us first of all dispose of the question of the number of high schools. The proposition that there can be far too many high schools specially in a country so much lacking in modern education, is itself unworthy of a moment's discussion ; but coming from the authorities charged with the education of this province, it has to be examined, if only to expose the narrow outlook and design of its authors. By a simple arithmetical calculation it has been discovered that instead of 1200, 400 high schools can sufficiently meet the requirements of this province. It is a discovery indeed, almost Pythagorean, that the growth of human institutions is guided by arithmetic alone. At any rate, no other Indian province has yet been able to profit by such a discovery. For the purpose of comparison let us take the number of scholars in the high stage on the 31st of March, 1931 in the schools of the following provinces.

Bengal	1,21,521
Madras	57,203
Punjab	32,351
Bihar & Orissa	26,834
United Provinces	19,558

Now if 400 schools be quite adequate for the purpose of Bengal, then evidently Madras should be satisfied with 200, Punjab with 110, Bihar and Orissa with 90, and the United Provinces with 70 high schools. But we find even in 1927 Madras had 342, Punjab 301, Bihar and Orissa 135 and the United Provinces 161 high schools

respectively for boys alone; and since then while every other province has been adding to the number of such high schools,[a] it is the calculation of the experts connected with the Bengal Ministry of Education that in this province alone high school education can advance with 400 institutions altogether. Even on the assumption that "in Bengal, Bihar and Central Provinces the economic limit of the provision of new high schools has been reached", the Auxiliary Committee of the Statutory Commission was of opinion "that in these provinces, apart from undeveloped areas which are not supplied with high schools, the improvement and consolidation of existing high schools are needed." It was a matter of comment, indeed, that in Bengal in particular, distribution of secondary schools was very unequal, but the quixotic proposal to secure even distribution by the omission of 2 out of every 3 high schools could hardly find favour with them. On the contrary, the Committee made their position perfectly clear by observing that "we do not wish for a moment that opportunities should be withheld from those village boys who may still be eager to enter an anglo-vernacular school with a view to passing matriculation and obtaining an employment in town and possibly a high position in the state. For this reason in particular we have already criticised the unequal distribution of facilities for anglo-vernacular education which obtains in some of the provinces."[b]

(*a*) High schools for boys in the different provinces in 1931-32 numbered : 378 in Madras, 221 in Bombay, 1096 in Bengal, 190 in U. P., 323 in the Punjab, 206 in Burma, 169 in Bihar and Orissa, 67 in C. P., 61 in Assam, 29 in N.W.F. (Vide *Tenth Quinquennial Review on Progress of Education in India p. 103.*)

(*b*) *Hartog Report p. 110.*

PREVENTING EASY PASSAGE TO THE HIGH STAGE.

But the curtailment of the scope and opportunities for high school education is not the only programme necessary in the opinion of the authors of the suggested scheme. High education in their opinion can advance, and with firm steps too, if high schools, composed henceforth of classes X to VII, be not only rare and remote but are also deprived of the very means to stand on their own legs. On economic grounds the high school system in Bengal was being assailed, but here economic considerations are criticised and discouraged. Not Economics but Physiology is therefore invoked to make out an apparently strong case. "The high school stage", run the Notes, "is not an altogether artificially created division. It corresponds to certain definite physical and psychological changes in the body", and hence on English lines it is argued, Bengal should have high schools entirely dissociated from the middle stages. Whether it will suit the tradition of the Bengalee boys of eleven and twelve summers to leave their homes and villages to avail of higher education at distant centres, whether it will be possible for their poor parents to finance a much costlier venture in remote residential institutions, are not relevant considerations. The new policy demands a horizontal division, and that the legs must suffer amputation if the trunk has to be ensured efficient development. No connection henceforth retained between the middle and the high stages, boys reading in classes below VII will not come in natural contact with students in the higher forms and entertain easy hopes and aspirations to proceed further. A completely watertight high school education, therefore, is conceived, under the scheme laid before the Education Conference, to be the best method to control the urge for high education from which the schools came into existence in

the past and evolved naturally and mostly out of the middle schools in the previous decades. It matters little to the authors of the scheme whether it is opposed to the history of the growth of high education in Bengal, rather that may be the chief merit of the scheme, but it has yet to be seen whether the people of this province will agree to be led blindfold into it and submit to the plan of writing off her present advance in high school education among the provinces of India.

CHAPTER IV.

A COSTLY DESIGN.

THE SUGGESTED INCREASE IN TUITION FEES.

While high school education is proposed to be made more costly and less easily available by limiting it to a much fewer number of institutions organised more or less on a residential basis, the direct attempt to increase the cost by raising the tuition fees, irrespective of the nature and the situation of the schools, cannot fail to be noticed. Much too frequent, almost annual, change of text books has already added to the burden of secondary education in this country. We are not of course opposed to revision of text books as often as may be necessary to meet the demands of new syllabus or of changed curricula incorporating the results of new investigation; but unfortunately in the present situation some writers of text books have felt encouraged to make unsubstantial and even trivial changes in their books so that the same copies may not be used for two successive years even though there has been no change in the syllabus or prescribed text books. No student in the high stage can now hope to proceed with his studies without purchasing books worth at least thirty rupees every year. Is it any wonder then that in this poor country schoolboys are now being driven more and more to beg for buying books?

The University Commission, not composed entirely of men accustomed to think in terms of the poverty of the Indian people, observed : "It must be recognised that the

Bengali student is usually poor ; that he seldom has money even to buy a few books ; and that any substantial increase of fees would in most cases fall hardly upon him." (a) But that is a recognition which can hardly be expected from the 'national government' that, according to the late Sir Surendranath Banerjea, has been in operation in the transferred departments since the inauguration of the Reforms. On the contrary, the scheme prepared under the auspices of such a 'national government' proposes that the minimum fees for boys in classes VII and VIII should be Rs. 3/- and those for classes IX and X Rs.4/- per head, not in the metropolis, neither in the big towns alone, but even in rural areas where such a large number of high schools is located, not again in those institutions particularly as provide training in scientific subjects, but in those as well that teach mostly the literary subjects.

THE OBSERVATIONS OF THE C. U. COMMISSION DEFINITELY IGNORED.

Again, it is not simply the spirit and the consideration with which the University Commission approached the question of revising the fee rate that have been ignored by the Bengal experts of today. They have ignored also the actual estimate and the basis of calculation of the Commission in this respect. "It has been estimated", observed the Commission, "that (apart from initial capital expenditure) a fair efficient secondary school education, under such conditions as exist in Bengal, could be provided for Rs. 60/- (£4) a head per annum. This is a modest enough figure. But *not more than half of it*, can on the average be met by pupils' fees ; leaving a net sum of about Rupees 30/- or £2 per annum for every pupil to be met from other sources".[b] But the Bengal administrators, who are

(a) *Calcutta University Commission Report* (*1917-19*) *Vol. V, Ch. LI, p. 256.*

(b) *Ibid p. 259.*

responsible for contributing hitherto the least proportion of cost per high school student in the whole of India viz., a magnificent 7·1 per cent., estimate that Rs. 48/- per annum per head is a bagatelle that may easily be contributed on an average by students even in rural high schools, and apart from hostel charges in the case of the boarders.

HIGH ECONOMICS.

The economic sense that guides the educational authorities in India is, of course, uncommonly keen in as much as it enables them to see that high prices "resulted directly in the withdrawal of a considerable number of pupils whose parents could no longer afford to keep them at school." [a] We shall not be surprised, therefore, if we come to hear next from these super-economists that with low prices comes the better ability to pay on the part of a predominantly agricultural people. So, what was not possible in 1919 when the index number of wholesale prices was 196 may, in view of such learned opinion, be expected now when the index number is 87 (1932-33). Anyway, the framers of the new scheme do not stand to lose by their miscalculation. The cry for high rate of fees, without lowering them in the estimate of outsiders and alien critics, will ensure a falling off in the enrolment for high schools and thus bring about a consummation devoutly wished for. A marvellous piece of educational policy indeed !

(a) *Eighth Quinquennial Review on Progress of Education in India p. 14.*

CHAPTER V.

CUTTING THE LAST CABLE.

SEEKING 'INDIAN ETONS'

It was not an Indian reactionary but a level-headed Britisher who came to occupy the bench of the Calcutta High Court, a deeply sympathetic student of Indian spiritual thought in one of its most ill-understood aspects in particular, a more generous defender of Indian civilisation and culture than any European who came out here in recent times, told an Indian audience, not many years ago, that "Even now there are among you those who seek 'Indian Etons' and the like. Such persons have always been ready to give up their old lamps for new". [a] It is light that matters, not lamps, will perhaps be the sophistic answer pointing out that we are in an age of appreciation of the Raman Effect and in the days of application of the Ultra-violet. To this again our reply is, that, while the importance of media has not diminished but developed in any scheme of new knowledge, he will be a bold man indeed who can say that environment does not count, and that utility and efficacy of the Ultra-violet will be as great and extensive in and around Calcutta as in and about London. The general purpose of education may be the same with all men in all countries, viz., to educe and elicit what is latent and help to realise the potentialities in human nature, but the agent and instrument may not always be the same. For example, boarding schools may be a necessity and play a great part in edu-

(a) Sir John Woodroffe : *Bharat Shakti* p. 22.

cation in those countries where children are regarded as encumbrances and parents as burdens to be parted with; but in countries where family is still a real unit of society and not a passing institution no boarding system can take its place as an educative factor. To reconstruct school education, therefore, on a restricted and residential (however reformed) basis, as the scheme placed before the Education Conference proposes to do, will be cutting the very last cable as it were. How let us explain.

ELIMINATION OF INDIAN RELIGION.

Whatever might have been the scheme outlined at the house of Sir Edward Hyde East, English education in Bengal started either with the denial of religion or with the affirmation of Christian faith. Its early teachers were either fired with the doctrines of the French Illumination and the message of the French Revolution or inspired by the doctrines of the Christian Church and imbued with the proselytizing zeal of the Christian missionaries. Indian Religion and discipline, Philosophy and practice, were equally the target of attack of both and went down before their modernist onslaught. The filtration theory succeeded so much as to find no room for Indian Religion and Indian Ethics in the school curricula. The principle of religious neutrality that came to be announced later by the British Government deliberately ignored in the educational sphere the traditional aim of Indian education "to set and keep man in the spiritual kingdom". Says Sir John Woodroffe:

"The notion that we can dispense with religion is a modern delusion due to half thinking and the absurd notion that there can be any neutrality (as it is called) touching religion. How can man be neutral as regards God? One seems to hear cosmic laughter at the mere suggestion. An agreement not to mention God is in itself a breach of neutrality in that it is an offence against religion". [a]

(a) *Bharat Shakti p.p. 19-20.*

And this offence against religion continued to be perpetrated with apparently sound political reasons but with undoubtedly evil moral results. And not only religion but ethical teaching also came to be eliminated from the school curricula. True, a letter from the Court of Directors to the Governor General in Council of Bengal dated as early as the 3rd June 1814, mentioned that "we are informed that there are in the Sanskrit language many excellent systems of Ethics" the study of which might be useful to the natives, but the research and trouble were never undertaken to find them out. The result was, writing more than a century afterwards, a European Ex-Director of Public Instruction had to admit that,

NOT ONLY RELIGION BUT ETHICS DISCARDED.

> " 'Moral instruction' has not been made an examination subject and plays no serious part in school life. Educational authorities have agreed generally, and their view has been accepted by the Government, that in the absence of a religious foundation the formation of character must depend on bringing out the moral significance of the 'humanities' as taught in schools and colleges," and humanities, again, "have received practically no attention in schools and far too little in University courses. The severely utilitarian treatment of the English language and literature and the inadequate teaching of vernacular and classical literature have afforded but scanty opportunities for the illustration of ethical principles". [a]

What could be the outcome of such a programme of education bereft of religion and morals? "What else can be expected" says Sir John Woodroffe "from a position so unnatural? Wrong education is the cause of physical and mental strain and sapping of moral strength. It is productive of instability leading in the case of some to violence, in the case of others to a paralyzing inner conflict or a sense

(*a*) Arthur Mayhew: *The Education of India p. 217.*

of intolerable oppression, and in a large number of ordinary and inferior natures to imitation, automatisms and subservience. The influences working on the student have been deracializing (if I may use the word to denote destruction of racial characteristics) devitalizing and deforming"[a]

YET ANOTHER SAVING FACTOR TO GO.

And if the destruction of all the best characteristics of the nation was not complete it was because of the saving virtue of the Indian home and the strange vitality of the seed of the race. It is highly unfortunate, therefore, that the only step that an unthinking officialdom can propose to take in countering the disastrous effects of the godless education of a century and a quarter, is to 'residentialise', if we may say so, the high school system and reduce the influence of the home and the family to a minimum. In their desire for fuller control, and distrust of the people which gives rise to it, the authorities propose to make large use of an instrument in school education which is undoubtedly of inferior value. For a plurality of reasons, poverty and tradition are not the least among them, boarding schools will not prove attractive for a long time to come, until, at any rate, with greatly improved economic condition the desired "Western attitude" come to prevail largely among an Eastern people. In the meantime they will of course effectively check the popular aspiration for high school education that is so much desired in certain quarters. True, the boarding system is availed and works in a way in connection with the colleges, but there you have to do with older and fewer students resorting to a small number of higher grade institutions. That hostels are a source of "danger and infection" many experienced teachers do admit, but in connection with the colleges that system is suffered as an unavoidable evil. But, so far as schools are concerned—schools that provide a

(a) *Bharat Shakti p. 42.*

scheme of education for boys under fifteen or sixteen years—there can be no necessity for such an instrument. Apart from that consideration there are other and very weighty reasons too, for not providing and promoting school education principally on a residential basis. In his "A Few Thoughts on Education" Sir Gurudas Banerjee gave definite expression to the opinion of responsible Indian guardians when he frankly observed "I would send a boy to a day school and not to a boarding institution", and we do not apologise for quoting in full his "reasons for taking this view" which have not lost their cogency even to-day :—

SIR GURUDAS BANERJEE ON BOARDING INSTITUTIONS.

"In the first place though a boarding institution may be a little more adapted for physical and intellectual education, it is much less adapted for moral and religious training than a boy's own home, and the advantage in one respect is more than counterbalanced by the disadvantage in the other. The home where we live with those we naturally love and respect must be more conducive to the growth of the unselfish and altruistic virtues, so necessary for our contentment and happiness, than the best boarding institution, where regard for fellow boarders and respect for superiors must be of an enforced character in the beginning at least. There is moreover another element of difference which cannot be eliminated, and which must operate to the disadvantage of a boarding school. Whereas all the comfort and convenience a boy may enjoy at home is obtained for love, in a boarding institution they are bought for money and sometimes vary according to fees paid. It was the absence of this element of difference which made the teacher's house where the student in ancient India used to reside as good as his home. And then as regards religious education in a country like India with its diversity of creeds, even the best regulated boarding school can be expected to make but very imperfect arrangements.

"In the second place the large number of students with whom boarding schools have to deal, must make mechanical discipline take the place of personal supervision in a much

greater degree there than in a boy's own home : and this must be a disadvantage with such institutions, especially in the case of boys who stand so much in need of personal attention". [a]

H. G. WELLS ON THE EDUCATIVE INFLUENCE OF THE FAMILY.

Is Sir Gurudas's opinion too anitque and inconsistent with modern ideas? We have no reason to think so. Who is a greater protagonist of 'revolution in education' than the author of "The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind"? In making his demand for new schools for the new world he does not minimise the educative influence of the Family group, for,

"It is in the family group that the restraints, disciplines, and self-sacrifices which make human society possible were worked out and our fundamental prejudices established, and it is in the family group, enlarged perhaps in many respects, and more and more responsive to collective social influences, that our social life must be relearnt, generation after generation". [b]

BERTRAND RUSSELL ON BOARDING SCHOOLS.

Mr. Wells's remarks may be considered too general an expression to lend support to the programme of day schools, but what has a thorough-going rationalist like the founder of the Beacon Hill School to say in the matter? Orthodox theology is no object of veneration with Mr. Russell and no one believes more in the application of new knowledge to the education of children, yet in weighing the merits and the demerits of day and boarding schools as instruments of true education he observes :—

"In a school many aspects of life do not appear ; it is an artificial world, whose problems are not those of the world at large".

* * *

"I think this tends towards a certain selfish completeness, a feeling of one's own personality as something exclusive. The family is the most natural corrective of this tendency, since it

(a) Sir Gurudas Banerjee : *A Few Thoughts on Education pp. 172-73.*
(b) H. G. Wells : *What are we to do with our lives ? p. 136.*

is a unit composed of people of different ages and sexes with different functions to perform ; it is organic, in a way in which a collection of homogeneous individuals is not."

* * *

"Respect for the rights of others is one of the things young people ought to learn, and it is more easily learnt in the family than elsewhere. It is good for boys and girls to know that their father can be harassed by worries and their mother worn out by a multiplicity of details. And it is good that filial affection should remain alive during adolescence. A world without family affection tends to become harsh and mechanical, composed of individuals who try to domineer, but become cringing if they fail. I fear that these bad effects are to a certain extent produced by sending children to boarding schools, and I regard them as sufficiently serious to offset great advantages". [(a)]

It is the importance of this instrument of real education that the framers of the new scheme in Bengal will reduce to a minimum, and if possible completely ignore, in their desire to limit the scope of high school education. "It will have to be realised and the realisation implemented in practice" command the Notes circulated before the Conference, "that in order to provide facilities for the child who chooses to continue his studies beyond the middle stage and who resides in an out-of-the-way place, the practice of attaching hostels to high schools must be extended. *Boys must be prepared to reside away from home*". "Facilities" indeed, indicated with a facile pen and offering a standing invitation to boys to schools placed mostly out of their reach; but it is definitely and deliberately creating a new menace to society and pursuing not even humanism but a mechanistic view of life.

(a) Bertrand Russell : *'On Education' pp. 230-231.*

PART: 2

THE CHARGES AGAINST THE EXISTING SYSTEM INVESTIGATED.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHARGE OF LOW STANDARD OF EXPENDITURE EXAMINED.

IF AVERAGE EXPENDITURE LOW, IT IS PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE OF (a) POOR GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION.

When the Sadler Commission made their report recording that "an annual expenditure of not less than Rs. 150 lakhs over and above fees" will have to be undertaken in the future [a] to make the system of secondary education in Bengal thoroughly efficient, they had little idea that in all seriousness they were indulging in a day dream. Nor could they imagine that fifteen long years after their report, the Education Department of the Government of Bengal under a new dispensation would announce their utter inability for all time to come to find even Rs. 40 lakhs for the improvement of high school education. So, the present position is that the Meston arrangement, hitherto alleged to be responsible for Bengal's meagre progress in education and other nation-building activities, may be revised, but the resurrection of the report of the Sadler Commission so unceremoniously buried will never come about. High education in Bengal has, therefore, no hopes before it. But that does not mean that it will be allowed to eke out its own existence in peace, though in want, with such support as can come from the people. Rather it has been considered opportune to follow up all past, present and prospective denial of adequate support, with the cry that there

(a) *Calcutta University Commission Report* (*1917-19*)*Vol. V, Ch. LI, p. 259.*

are many high schools in Bengal unable to pay their way and hence economically unfit to exist. And to damn the whole high school system in this province, comparison is made with the financial position and enrolment of high schools in the other provinces. Two things are apparently forgotten in this connection—deliberately overlooked or not nobody can say. In the first place, it is pointed out, not in regret but by way of reproach, that in Bengal the average expenditure on a high school was Rs. 705 per month in 1926-27, while in Madras and Bombay a high school was maintained at an average cost of Rs. 1587 and Rs. 2208 respectively. There would be greater appreciation of truth indeed, were it not forgotten at the same time that the average annual aid received by a school from government and local funds was Rs. 4066 in Madras, Rs. 7415 in Bombay and only Rs. 1997 in Bengal.

(*b*) THE ESSENTIAL FACT THAT IS OVERLOOKED VIZ. THAT MAJORITY OF HIGH SCHOOLS HAVE COME TO BE LOCATED AMONG POOR PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS.

But the essential point that is missed, or is not brought out at any rate, in instituting a comparison with such other provinces as Bombay, Madras etc., is, that here in Bengal high school education has long ceased to be confined to the more resourceful section of the people and to areas with urban density of population. So far as India is concerned, in Bengal its joy and burden have been over "the widest commonalty spread" and the greater part of the system has advanced to the stage of catering mental pabulum to rural areas. In disparagement it is pointed out that the student population per high school in Bengal is comparatively low, and sometimes does not even reach the strength in number necessary to ensure and finance a high standard of efficiency. Unless it is maintained, therefore, that the poor folks in rural areas have no business to seek high education so long as their economic condition does not permit them to spend on an alien and luxurious scale or

even on a scale that an economically advanced urban area can afford, no comparison can be and ought to be drawn between Bengal and the other provinces where high education has hardly progressed much beyond urban limits and is being carried on with much larger aid from Government. The following table[a], showing the number of rural high schools and that of scholars served by them in the different provinces, may help us to understand the real position and the stage of advance that high school education has really attained in Bengal.

Province	Rural High Schools	Scholars in 1930–31.
BENGAL	756	1,45,578
MADRAS	204	61,802
BURMA	72	12,530
PUNJAB	65	17,362
BIHAR & ORISSA	60	13,296
ASSAM	17	3,554
BOMBAY	15	2,370
U. P.	7	1,577
C. P.	3	707

It will be seen that with 63 per cent. of her high schools (756 out of about 1200) located in rural areas, Bengal alone serves more rural students than the rest of India including Burma, and that, even in the widest service that she renders, she has not the very least number of pupils per school. It is remarkable, indeed, that even in such a widespread undertaking, she has on an average nearly 200 boys in every rural high school. If, inspite of this strength in number, the financial position of a rural high school does not appear to be satisfactory at times, it is because the economic position of an institution

(a) Prepared from *Statistical Abstract for British India* (*Tenth Issue, 1921-22 to 1930-31*) *pp. 414-416.*

cannot be disproportionately better than the economic condition of the people around, especially when to their unaided efforts it owes its existence.

'SUPERFLUITY'.

To the captious critics, however, this is not a satisfactory position. They can overflow with sympathy for rural Bengal on suitable occasions, but how can they allow high education to devastate the country side ? Rural Bengal can be taxed to maintain an Education Department headed by a highly paid, minister and staffed with necessary and unnecessary men on the richest administrative scale of pay, but what it cannot have is a "superfluity of schools". An up-to-date policy requires that "this superfluity which is one of the 'radical vices' of the whole system," [(a)] rural Bengal cannot be permitted to enjoy *even at her own cost*. For it must not be forgotten that about half the total number of high schools in the whole province do not get a farthing of government aid.

But, is it not a fact that even in Bengal, with such an alleged plethora of schools, the average area per high school is 77sq. miles and the average male population per high school not less than 24,000 souls ? Then how can a day school, not necessarily conducted on a residential basis, be considered even sufficient for such a big area and constituency? That is not explained ; but the comparison with Bombay and Madras is drawn to establish the alleged superfluity, totally disregarding the differing conditions and the different stages of advance in these provinces, and taking leave of even common sense that ought to make one alive to the fact that relative abundance does not necessarily mean adequate provision, far less can it mean actual superfluity.

So the ground is prepared for drastic reduction ignoring

(a) *Eighth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in Bengal (1927-32) p. 43.*

logic and common sense, the facts and the situation and with the general observation that "there are schools with an income of Rs. 300 a month." And, because there may be some schools of this type, the conclusion is at once drawn with a logic and dogmatism that all the world over is bureaucracy's own, that "neither the numerical strength, nor the allocation, nor the quality of general work, nor even their results in matriculation examination justify the existence of a considerable number of existing high schools." Prejudice will of course make much of the peccant part, however insignificant in comparison with the whole it may be ; but the first question that can logically arise in this connection is, how many high schools there are of this type, and how could a large number of schools with an income of Rs.300 or less per month come to be recognised by the University when the University standard for recognition was a monthly expenditure of Rs.375. Is it to be supposed that the University in the face of so much antagonism from the Education Department could afford to ignore its own standard? If it could, then surely it has to explain its position, as the aforesaid observation constitutes a direct attack on the University, and we believe the University is more competent to repel the attack than any outsider. But referring to the very latest Quinquennial Report we find that the average standard of expenditure in the high school system of Bengal is indeed much higher than the illustration taken to condemn it. In that report we find it stated that the average expenditure per high school in Bengal was Rs. 718 per month in 1931-32 and that the average cost of an aided school was Rs. 795 and of an unaided institution Rs. 521, per month. [(a)] Apart from such schools, therefore, that maintain a standard lower than the University require-

(*a*) *Ibid p. 42.*

CAN A NEAR APPROACH TO THE DEPARTMENTAL STANDARD OF 1926 BE A CERTAIN GROUND FOR CONDEMNATION IN 1932 ?

ment and whose number must be few and not certainly 'considerable' as suggested, the question arises if on an average the cost of an unaided high school be Rs. 521 per month, what justification can there be to hit such schools down when they are so many in number and most of them, again, are well-established by this time. Was not the qualifying standard of expenditure for receiving aid fixed at Rs. 540 when the distribution of a recurring grant sanctioned in 1925-26 was undertaken ? [(a)] If some schools were considered deserving not simply of existence but of encouragement by maintaining *with* government aid a scale of expenditure of Rs. 540 per month, how could others that survived in the struggle for existence *without* government aid be considered fit for official condemnation even after maintaining on an average a scale of monthly expenditure of Rs. 521 it is difficult indeed to understand. Another principle that was adopted in 1925-26 in the distribution of grants-in-aid was that "No aid was" to be "given to any school unless its permanency was assured and necessary in the opinion of the Inspector," [(b)] and at the close of the quinquennium it was observed in the Seventh Quinquennial Review, not without a note of self-congratulation, that "only schools which deserved to survive were helped and the schools which have been helped have been made better fitted to survive." If that were so, with what propriety again many of them could be condemned to perish now only the authors of the new scheme and policy could pretend to explain. To ordinary mortals with no claims to the title of supermen the ethics of the new policy is not obvious though its evolution can be understood only on the supposition that the policy five years back was one of merely fattening the sheep for the knife.

(a) *Vide Seventh Quinquennial Revew on Progress of Education in Bengal (1922-23—1925-27) p. 41.* (b) *Ibid p. 41.*

CHAPTER VII.

THE CHARGE OF LOW STANDARD OF EXPENDITURE FURTHER EXAMINED.

BEHIND INCREASING AVERAGE COST THERE IS LARGER POPULAR CONTRIBUTION.

In view of the fact that high school education in Bengal is not at the present stage a concern of the rich few but of the poor many, and that almost as many as two out of every three such schools are now situated in the rural area, it can never be a matter for condemnation that an unaided high school can spend on an average a little over five hundred rupees (Rs. 521) per month. Such was in fact the qualifying standard laid down by the Education Department a few years ago, and it was much higher than the minimum standard required by the University. While those who have any appreciation of the economic condition of rural Bengal will not be disposed to question the appropriateness of the minimum standard of expenditure demanded by the University for the purpose of affiliation, it is only persons who are inspired by foreign ideas and have no realisation of the poverty and of the aspirations of the people that will immediately insist on a higher standard of average expenditure for high schools from the generality of the people of this country. Rather all sane and patriotic men will deem it a matter for congratulation that the average standard of expenditure of even an unaided institution now stands nearly 39 per cent. higher than the minimum starting scale. And if it is remembered that inspite of the alleged rapid increase in the number of such schools the average cost per school instead of

dwindling down is increasing quinquennium after quinquennium, it will have to be recognised that the people are not altogether unmindful of the necessity of improving their expenditure on high schools by making larger contribution by way of fees.

PROGRESS OF EXPENDITURE.

The following figures will indicate how the cost per school as well as the cost per boy has generally gone up during the last decade.

	Cost per school per month	Cost per boy per year
1921-22	Rs. 605	Rs. 34.6
1926-27	Rs. 705	Rs. 35.7
1931-32	Rs. 718	Rs. 36.2

In their anxiety to run down the high school system the authors of the last Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in Bengal not only ignored these commendable facts but expressed much dissatisfaction over the small increase without making due allowance for the recent economic depression. But the previous Report, not prepared under a new inspiration, observed, in noticing the total increase in expenditure on high schools by more than 19½ lakhs in one quinquennium (1922-27) :

"It is clear that the total increase in expenditure is not accounted for wholly by the increase of schools ; the cost of maintaining a school is also greater now than five years ago " (a)

* * *

"The higher cost of a school again, is only partly explained by the increase in the average strength of schools ; the cost per boy has increased and is now, roughly, almost double what it was in 1911-12. " (b)

Taking a wider view, however, and without entertaining any preconceived bias against the high schools in particular, it can be readily seen from the following table that second-

(a) *Seventh Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in Bengal (1922-23—1926-27) p. 47* . (b) *ibid p. 48.*

ary education in Bengal does not, even in its much wider sweep, show less progress in average expenditure than in most of the other provinces.

Names of Provinces	1921—22	1930—31	Advance of Average Cost
Madras	12,441	16,020	+ 3579
Bombay	12,045	12,877	+ 832
BENGAL	3,840	4,895	+ 1055
United Provinces	7,068	7,325	+ 257
Punjab	5,984	3,775	— 2209
Bihar & Orissa	4,126	4,616	+ 490
Central Provinces	3,938	4,953	+ 1015
Assam	3,241	3,576	+ 335

Now if we remember that in Bengal the contribution towards total expenditure on secondary schools from government and other public funds is very low, nay the lowest, and that from fees the highest among the Indian provinces, we shall then be in a position to understand what a great libel it is to suggest that the people of this province are less keen in their desire to improve the financial position of the secondary schools than those of the other provinces in India. Surely secondary education is not the worst part of our educational system notwithstanding the weakness of some of its new-born units. It is really in the primary sphere that Bengal has attracted much more criticism from the Hartog Committee. But while this province is unable to finance universal primary education in its present circumstances, should misplaced zeal be reserved for launching a crusade against the high schools in the secondary system which have always secured larger and yet larger contribution from the people ?

NO AID BUT CRITICISM FOR THE NEEDY.

But what is still more strange and unfortunate is that the charge of inadequate expenditure is coming from the very party that would not aid and encourage the infant and

struggling institutions but would lay down the principle that "No aid was to be given to any school unless its permanency was assured".[a] Had the departmental policy been to help the deserving and needy institutions and not to curse those that really required nursing, the position of the high schools in the province would have been much better indeed. The departmental report observes with some amount of self-complaisance that on an average the aided highs chools maintain a much higher standard of expenditure (Rs. 795) than the unaided institutions (Rs. 521). If instead of trying to appear better in their own report the Department had sought to render greater service—if instead of laying down Rs. 540 as the minimum standard of expenditure to be maintained with government aid, they had a plan to help schools with an income of Rs. 300-400 with a grant of at least 50 per cent. of their income to start with, announcing at the same time that the grant will be gradually withdrawn after a decade,—there would have been much less room for comments on the helpless and more justification for the claim that government aid helped many schools to survive. As the policy stands at present it is one of helping those that financially deserve less support and of taking unworthy delight in damning the distressed, among whom probably stand the greatest instances of self-help. With an income of Rs. 600 it is possible to maintain in an existing high school of classes III to X an initial scale of expenditure not much inferior to that indicated in the Conference scheme. Whether such a policy can appeal to a Department which is afraid of nothing so much as expansion of education and loves more to criticise than to contribute, is of course more than we can say.

We cannot, however, conclude our examination of the

(*a*) *Ibid. p 41.*

DOES INADEQUATE PAY NECESSARILY MEAN INEFFICIENT TEACHING?

charge of low expenditure formulated against the high schools without questioning the assumption that in this country ill-paid teachers must necessarily mean inefficient teaching or that efficiency must vary with the scale of pay. While it is undoubtedly a regrettable phenomenon that many of the teachers in the mufassil and particularly in the rural area have to go without adequate remuneration, there is no ground for believing that any body regrets it more than those who are in the management of the poorer schools. Nor can it be accepted as a fact that the generality of teachers in our schools do not give their very best simply because they cannot secure the highest payment for their service. A teacher going round with a begging bowl to feed his students and educate them is yet a living tradition in the orient and particularly in India. However difficult it may be for persons inspired by foreign ideals to believe that there are men in the teaching line who have more regard for their mission than for money, it is a fact that even at this date there are many in the service of the high schools in this country who are not such mercenaries as the departmental reports would have us believe. If plain living and high thinking has not become an altogether lost ideal with those who are engaged in teaching in this country, they must be the very first to abhor the idea of compelling the poor and half-fed students to find more money than they can afford for the teachers' pay. Granted there are teachers in some struggling institutions who submit to "enforced contribution" or accept less pay than the pay bills indicate, but are not the rules enforced from without more responsible for such discrepancy and delinquency than the heart (or call it common sense, if you like) that would prefer an adjustment with the economic environment? Where schools are not proprietary institutions it will be difficult indeed to find teachers that will be so untrue to their vocation as to sacrifice schools and put

them out of recognition for their own sake. It is always desirable indeed that the teachers should have adequate remuneration, but the scale of remuneration can be suitably fixed not without reference to the economic condition of the pupils; nor can it be safely forgotten that the principle of adequate payment may be so emphasised as to kill the very goose that would lay the golden eggs. To insist therefore that the teachers must be absolutely and not relatively above want, however great may be the wants of the generality of those that are taught by them, is an attempt to import snobbery in a sacred sphere, or at best a pretence of befriending the teachers that the teachers themselves will not approve. If the highest scale of pay for the teachers could alone secure proportionately and uniformly better results, the first Retrenchment Committee would not have put forward a very strong plea for the deprovincialisation of the government high schools and arrived at the definite conclusion that "they are no longer models and they have ceased to inspire". The Education Department themselves probably ceased to have such an article of faith about the absolute efficacy of the highest scale of pay, and even if they had, they were unable to substantiate it. For it was a comparatively recent Report that had to make the guarded admission : "One thing is clear, Government alone pays an attractive scale of salaries to its teachers and presumably obtains the services of the best qualified. This presumption is generally, but not always, true".[a] Our view, however, is that it is a mere presumption not verified by results and is far from being generally true. But whether such presumption be true or not, it is a false assumption that in this country you can have efficient teaching only where there are high emoluments.

(a) *Seventh Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in Bengal (1922-23—1926-27) p. 48*

CHAPTER VIII.

OBSESSION OF THE MATRICULATION AND WANT OF ALL-ROUND TRAINING.

A SNOBBISH DESPAIR.

"If schools were allowed to be started who could secure two rotten benches and one old mat and could hire a hall there was no possibility of improving education at all." [(a)] So it is not enough for a formalist in education that schools come to be recognised when they have a permanent *pucca* residence and essential equipments, their birth has also to be examined, and if their origin be so humble as to scandalise those that have returned from a pilgrimage to England, then they should not be recognised by the University, even when an enquiry by the Inspectors of a not always sympathetic Education Department establishes the fact that they are properly housed, equipped and maintained as per University standard. Their very birth should be considered tainted and should constitute a sufficient disqualification for all time to come. How could schools that started not simply with broken benches but even with mats create a desire for hats, the only approved marks of "kultur"? Messages delivered on mats, translated or interpreted, may yet win doctorates here or furnish texts for Upton or Hibbert lectures there; they may be more in requisition in Germany, France and Italy than the mimicries

(a) These words are taken from the reported speech of an eloquent and enthusiastic supporter of the scheme of reduction of high schools who joined the Conference.

of many of the present-day Indian Ministers and ex-Ministers; but what of that? Educational progress is only possible if it respects our newly acquired abhorrence of mats. Those who stand for education on new and scientific lines may agree to "supply the humanistic elements of education in ways not involving a great apparatus of learning" but pseudo-scientists must have costly equipments, for, with them polished double benches can only mean perfect education.

THE OBSESSION OF THE MATRICULATION HOW IT ARISES AND WHY PERSISTS.

But the humble origin of many of the schools is not their only vice. The charges on which it is desired to convict them *enbloc* are many indeed and, not simply many but, multiplying as well. You do not know what charges will be formulated to-morrow even on the facts of to-day, nor can you be sure that the charges framed and disposed of years ago will not be revived again for fresh trial and conviction, and, if possible, condemnation of many of the schools to nothing short of death. One of the charges of the latter description is the "Obsession of the Matriculation". It was raised before the University Commission but could not secure the desired conviction of the high schools. Rather in giving them the benefit of doubt, as we might say, the Commission delivered their judgment thus :

"Why have so many of the secondary schools in Bengal been led to concentrate their efforts narrowly upon getting their pupils through the Matriculation Examination? What has induced among teachers, parents and school committees in the Presidency a habit of mind so repressive of vital force in education, and that at a time when the strongest tendencies in the West encourage a liberal view of the work of secondary schools? The explanation is found in the very limited range of careers open to educated young Indians, in the value of a knowledge of English to those who enter such

careers, and in the disproportionate degree of importance which is consequently attached to recognised certificates of literary attainment."

* * *

"In the life of an English or American school boy there is no test upon which so much turns, no examination to fail in which brings such irretrievable disaster. An active business career, a life of adventure abroad, the army, the sea, are all for one reason or another less open to the Bengali boy than to a boy in the West." [a]

For sixteen long years this weighty opinion has been lying unheeded before the authorities. Hardly any new avenues have been opened up or new channels constructed to divert the enthusiasm and energy to more profitable courses from the utilitarian point of view. Without wasting money on unnecessary government schools on general lines the Government could have themselves opened, and helped others to open, a sufficient number of technical and industrial schools to divert a large number of students passing the Matriculation Examination. But they have done little to provide such opportunities on a large scale. Bengal, as we have seen, has the largest number of high schools in the rural area, but her Ministers took a long time to frame a scheme of agricultural education to fit in with the secondary schools; and even after a scheme borrowed mainly from the Punjab was advertised to have been adopted, only very inadequate progress could be made in giving effect to it.[b] And the most outstanding and regrettable fact is, that Bengal has as yet no expenditure to show on higher agricultural education, whereas in 1930-31 Madras came to spend

(*a*) *Calcutta University Commission Report* (*1917-19*) *Vol. I. Ch. IX, pp. 256-66.*

(*b*) Only 14 Seconary Schools (fewer H. E. than M. E.) have hitherto been helped to provide for agricultural training (vide *Report on Public Instruction in Bengal for 1932-33 Ch. IV. Para 5.*)

Rs. 1,04,023, Bombay Rs. 1,73,308, United Provinces Rs. 1,75,418, Punjab Rs. 1,41,740 and Burma Rs. 2,31,735 on agricultural colleges. The only cure for "Obsession of the Matriculation" examination, however, that the Education Department could devise was to insist on more passes at the Matriculation Examination. From time to time the Inspectors of Schools have issued warning that unless 80 per cent. or so of the boys in Class X of a school appeared, and an equally high percentage passed the Matriculation, the aid, where it was given, would be withdrawn and the school considered an undesirable institution. Is it any wonder then that, in consequence of the aforesaid laches on the one hand and the warning addressed on the other, all the energies of the teachers and the students will be concentrated on 'securing passes'? And can there be any justification in the circumstances for such squeamish comment that the University Entrance Examination has long dominated the secondary school teaching? But consistency has never been a strong point with the Education Department. The moment a very large percentage of examinees succeeds in the Matriculation, they will have the cry of "alarming increase" of passes raised against the University; and if the examination be stiffened with the result that a fairly large percentage fails to pass, then forthwith figures of "wastage" will be compiled. Thus the percentage of passes in the Matriculation serves a double purpose; if high, that of a stick to beat the University with for its 'lax' examination, if low, that of a rod for the chastisement of the high schools for their inefficiency.

THE DOMINATION OF THE COMMON ENTRANCE EXAMINATION IN ENGLAND.

In this connection we are tempted to quote what Mr. Cyril Norwood, Headmaster of Harrow, observed a few years ago in connection with the Common Entrance Examination to the boarding schools in England.

"A great many of the preparatory schools direct their teaching wholly to this examination, for they cannot afford to have their boys fail. There are some who instruct—I cannot use the word educate—wholly by means of old examination papers. In any case, the object aimed at is to give a boy of thirteen the faculty of putting down knowledge in snippet form on all the subjects which he learns, in rapid succession during a space of two days, and he naturally regards this as the intellectual end of education. The end is not to learn Latin or History or Mathematics but to do a paper on them ; hence drill has to be substituted for interest and cram for teaching". "Of course it is easy to say to the preparatory schools, 'Forget all about the examination, don't let the boys think about it ; just teach, and all will be well'. That, I am certain, is true, but only a few believe it, and act upon it.". (a)

Mr. Norwood might well have added that those who believe the least in it insist that others shall act upon it, those who would judge by examination results enjoin others to ignore the examination, and even censure others if they attach sufficient importance to it. The fact, however, is that wherever an examination is of the nature of an entrance examination, wherever success in it secures passport for proceeding with further studies or opens up prospects for desirable employment, the examination must hold those who prepare or help preparation for it in fee, and dominate their minds. Psychologically it must work for transference of interest from the studies to the results, from books to notes, from acquisition of knowledge to the winning of credits and certificates. And this must be the case irrespective of latitudes and longitudes.

OTHER UNFOUNDED CHARGES EXAMINED.

Here, however, those who would make much of examination results, one way or the other, have a high philosophy to offer to the schools, and a great indictment to prefer against them. "The high stage of secondary education"

(a) *The Schools of England Ch. VI. p. 129.*

they say "has two functions in a well-constituted system. First, it should prepare those pupils who wish for and are capable of further education for the University. But, secondly, for the large number who can and will go no further it should provide a sound all-round training, complete in itself, which, while perhaps not preparing directly for a technical career, yet provides the requisite grounding in general knowledge and training of the mind and character. But this second object has been almost completely lost sight of in Bengal and the attempts which have been made from time to time have, as we shall see, not yet achieved any large measure of success". [a] Now, so far as the first of the stated objects is concerned, it has to be admitted that, even in this province not rolling in wealth, more than sixty per cent. of boys passing the Matriculation Examination are found in the first college class. When, out of sheer economic considerations, many have commenced to regret that such a high percentage should proceed for scholastic study, it cannot be urged that the secondary schools fail at least in fulfilling the first object and do not prepare boys sufficiently for University education. But it is alleged, in other connections, that the Matriculation is not an adequate test of fitness for profiting by a college course. There again many well informed persons will join issue, as the fairly large percentage of success in the later University examinations undoubtedly proves that there is no justification for such a comment. Assuming, however, for argument's sake that any body privileged to write an official report is competent to pronounce judgment on a learned body like the University, and that the Matriculation does not mean an adequate equipment, the question arises: why could not the recommendations of the University Commission for

IF MATRICULATION NOT AN ADEQUATE TEST HOW LATER SUCCESSES ARE POSSIBLE?

(a) *Eighth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in Bengal (1927-32) p. 34.*

strengthening post-matriculation study by the establishment of more well-equipped second grade colleges in Bengal be given effect to ?" We cannot too strongly emphasise our conviction that the creation of a series of efficient intermediate colleges in every part of Bengal constitutes the most valuable reform which can be undertaken at this juncture. It is in our judgment the most urgent of the reforms we have proposed, and it should be undertaken at once." [a] Such was the most emphatic recommendation of the Sadler Commission. But, who are more responsible for not taking adequate steps to bring about this "most urgent" measure of reform than those whom the Commission could expect to be guided by their report ? Knowing these laches, the official mind however is not inclined to make much of the first point, in framing their indictment against the schools ; it is the failure to achieve the second object that is here strongly attacked and regretted. The high schools do not "provide a sound all-round training complete in itself," or even the "requisite grounding in general knowledge and training of the mind and character." To examine this charge it may be profitable to enquire at the start, whether the high schools in Bengal frame their own syllabus ? Whether the official critics have any hand in framing the same ? Whether the teachers or managers of the high schools select even the text books ? Whether and how far at least half of the high schools in Bengal have any liberty to use a single book not approved by the Director of Public Instruction ? Now, if these questions can be answered admitting only the large responsibility of the critics and exonerating the high schools, it does not surely lie in the mouth of the

WHO DID NOT GIVE EFFECT TO THE SADLER RECOMMENDATION FOR MORE WELL-EQUIPPED INTERMEDIATE COLLEGES ?

WHO FRAMES SYLLABUS AND PRESCRIBES TEXT BOOKS FOR HIGH SCHOOLS ?

(*a*) *Calcutta University Commission Report* (*1917-19*) *Vol. V. Ch. LI. p. 260.*

HOW MUCH IS PSYCHOLOGICALLY PRACTICABLE WITHIN FIFTEEN OR SIXTEEN YEARS ?

former to say that the high schools do not provide an "all-round training complete in itself." No body who can traduce from a position of authority needs have particular regard for truth and the reality of the situation, but carping criticism cannot surely advance a sacred cause like that of education. It is easy to demand a "sound all-round training complete in itself" in boys of fifteen or sixteen years, and it is easier indeed to demand it if persons other than the critics have to realise the ideal, but it hardly shows any accurate estimate of the psychological capacity of such young boys. Faced with the demand for inclusion of all possible subjects in the Matriculation, the University Commission rightly refused to make the course "encyclopaedic". Examining, however, the syllabus of particular subjects what do we see ? Take, for example, Mathematics. Even the author of "Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy" does not think that Geometry and Algebra should be introduced in the school curricula before the 'age of twelve', and is further of opinion that "Mathematics and Science, in the years of twelve to fourteen, ought only to be pursued to the point at which it becomes clear whether a boy or girl has any aptitude for them". [a] But our boys under the present syllabus have to start with Geometry earlier and deal with the harder portion of Matriculation Algebra at fourteen. *The age at which general education may be brought to a completion for purposes of specialisation is included in the 'Intermediate' stage of our educational system. To forget it, is to confuse our high schools with schools in those countries where the school leaving age does not arrive before the eighteenth year.* There is another obvious confusion between a demand for "all-round training complete in itself" and that for "requisite grounding in general knowledge". The latter must be the object of every high

CONFUSION TO BE AVOIDED.

(a) Bertrand Russell : *On Education. p. 214.*

school, constituted as it is even in our province, to impart. But no evidence has been put forward to substantiate the prejudiced statement that high schools in Bengal alone have generally failed to impart it, and that for reasons within their control.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHARGE OF NOT TRAINING THE MIND AND CHARACTER EXAMINED.

A SWEEPING INDICTMENT.

However vehemently it may be denied, it is a fact that officials in this country are more accustomed to think of themselves as masters of the people than as public servants. This mentality finds abundant expression in the official reports. One who runs may read in them not surely rare instances of captious criticism and unmeasured censure of the people and of popular institutions and movements. The strictures passed are sometimes so sweeping in character, so full of exaggeration, that they bear the obvious impress of untruth. For example, it has suddenly dawned upon the Education department that most of the high schools in Bengal are undesirable institutions, and at once it is put on record that they do not impart the "requisite training of the mind and character". What is the requisite measure it is not explained. What test is not satisfied, what standard is not reached, remain undisclosed. Nor it is made explicit consistently with what aims and ideal of education this 'training of the mind and character' has to be accomplished. But the critics are emphatic in their opinion that this object of 'training the mind and character' is not only not realised, but has been "almost completely lost sight of in Bengal", not of course by those who frame, control and direct the educational programme—and that is probably the significance of the term 'almost'—but apparently by those who

execute the programme, viz., run the institutions and do the teaching. All the great leaders of men, all the distinguished judges, jurists and administrators, all the eminent scientists, litterateurs and artists, all successful professors, doctors and engineers that have passed through the high schools in Bengal during the last three quarters of a century had, therefore, either no 'training of the mind and character', or if they had something of it, they had it presumably by way of 'chance variation' after passing out of the school stage. Their earlier connection with one or other of the high schools did not apparently contribute anything towards their training of mind and character. The high stage of secondary education in Bengal offered, according to the official reviewers, such a singularly barren soil that even "attempts made from time to time" could yield little results.

RUSSELL ON ENGLISH PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

But how do the English public schools, the beau ideals of our loudest critics and front rank administrators, impart the training of mind and character that the modern world needs ? An eminent British writer says that in them

"Intellect was sacrificed, because intellect might produce doubt. Sympathy was sacrificed because it might interfere with governing 'inferior' races or classes. Kindliness was sacrificed for the sake of toughness ; imagination for the sake of firmness. In an unchanging world, the result might have been a permanent aristocracy, possessing the merits and defects of the Spartans. But aristocracy is out of date, and subject populations will no longer obey even the most wise and virtuous rulers." "The battle of Waterloo might have been won on the playing fields of Eton, but the British Empire is being lost there. The modern world needs a different type, with more imaginative sympathy, more intellectual suppleness, less belief in bull-dog courage and more belief in technical knowledge. The administrator of the future must be the servant of free citizens, not the benevolent ruler of admiring subjects. The aristocratic tradition embedded in British higher education is its bane." [a]

(*a*) Bertrand Russell : *On Education p. 44.*

THE CONDITION AND BASIS OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT.

Let us not waste further time over the merits and demerits of the English public schools ; but will the authorities here agree with Bertrand Russell when he says "Neither character nor intelligence will develop as well or as freely where the teacher is deficient in love ; and love of this kind consists essentially in feeling the child as an end"? ."The teacher should love his children better than his State or his Church ; otherwise he is not an ideal teacher". If what Russell says be true, can teachers enjoined to do propaganda for the state and required sometimes to do the work of the police be expected to build up the character and intelligence of boys of the present generation ? If teachers are not to stand uncompromisingly for truth and a spirit of critical enquiry, but have to instil ideas imposed from without, can they successfully perform their duty of 'training the mind and character' of the boys ? But is it not their duty, it will be asked, to enforce proper discipline ? The Indian ideal will perhaps enforce nothing but make room for something harder than discipline and even permit boys to be trained in '*tapas*' if the teacher can truly entertain parental love, the love of a Varuna to Bhrigu. [a] Will the authorities, again, agree with Russell when he says : "I will take four characteristics which seem to me jointiy to form the basis of an ideal character : vitality, courage, sensitiveness, and intelligence" ? [b] If they do, can it not be enquired how small boys generally without an adequate supply of food, suffering often from preventible disease, running to school after their principal meal and kept confined in hot climate for long hours with nominal recess, can be expected to have sound physique and plenty of vitality ? Then, can it be truthfully said that cultivation of courage (*Abayam*) is

(*a*) Taittiriya Upanishad : *Bhrigu Valli.*
(*b*) Bertrand Russell : *On Education p. 48.*

permitted to stand in the forefront of the educational programme of a subject nation ? Is it conductive, again, to encouragement of sensitiveness in young boys to insist on their punishment for not coming to school treading over the bodies of their prostrate, though ill-advised, fellow students, or for absence, say, on the day of Mahatma Gandhi's fasting ? Is cultivation of intellect promoted and can thoughts be provoked, after all, by suppressing the spirit of enquiry and providing instruction through a foreign medium ?

DO THE ORIGINAL AIM AND SUBSEQUENT POLICY ENSURE CHARACTER BUILDING ?

Then, again, the question of character development cannot but raise fundamental issues. If with the earliest start in English Education, if after a century of experience with public schools, Bengal was going to be told that she had entirely overlooked the training of mind and character, there must have been something wrong with the original aim and object and with the subsequent policy and programme pursued by the authorities. "All who welcomed the final settlement of 1835", says Mr. Mayhew, "looked forward with Macaulay to the day when the educated Indian would be 'English in taste, opinion, morals and intellect' and when the English connection with India would thereby be firmly and for ever established", [a] and that, underlying those aims, there was "a deep-seated conviction of the superiority of western civilisation and culture to anything produced or capable of being produced in the East".[b] Not only Trevelyan, but even Professor Seeley was of opinion that "Macaulay's minute remains the great land mark in the history of our empire considered as an institute of civilisation. It marks the moment when we deliberately recognised that a function had devolved on us

(*a*) Arthur Mayhew : *The Education of India p. 20.*

(*b*) *Ibid p. 20.*

WHAT DOES SIR JOHN WOODROFFE SAY?

in Asia similar to that which Rome fulfilled in Europe", that is, it was that of Romanising, if not 'Hellenising the barbarians', as a professor in the Presidency College was reported to have observed almost the other day. That this policy scored an apparent, even if temporary, success there could be no doubt about it. "The power of the West" says Sir John Woodroffe "working in a weakened Indian body tended to overlay and suffocate the Indian soul. A class arose, and still to some extent exists, which finding everything western to be good, neglected its ancient heritage, which lost soul-life became imitative and lived upon the borrowed ideas of others and not upon its own" [a]. Encouraged by this superficial and short-lived success the authorities went forward almost with a resolution to supplant Indian culture by another. "Such an attempt will meet with some difficulty because of the natural resistance of the *Sangskara* which is the result of centuries of past experience." "But perseverance will do a great deal. Let the first generation which is naturally weak—(for when a foreigner gains rule over another people that people must be weak)—be dazzled by the pomp and power of their rulers. Let them and succeeding generations be told that this Power, and all the good things which accompany it, are the fruits of a superior civilisation. Let the teachers constantly harp upon the inferiority of the ruled, upon the inferiority of their religion and philosophy and art and of their social institutions, Let the first be called a crude superstition, or idle speculation, and the second interesting as an antique relic but not otherwise of value. Let art be called barbaric and so on. Let this be repeated in season and out. Further, let the education be of a foreign type in which all that is specifically Indian is

(*a*) Sir John Woodroffe: *Is India Civilised? p. 292.*

ignored. Then let it be made clear that the way to 'get on', to get appointments, emoluments and success is to make oneself as like one's Rulers and their Race as possible, and in any case make an English education and a degree following thereon indispensable to state and professional employment. In this and other ways the *Sangskara,* acquired through centuries, is so repressed by another that the Indian character and outlook is partially and temporarily lost".[a] But as *Sangskara* "is not easily pushed away, nor can be wholly destroyed by another" in the inevitable clash and the conflict of ideals and ideas three types of character can emerge. The first type, forgetful of the individual and national self, submits and eventually succumbs to external influences and stimuli. The second, true to the Ethos of the people, discards no external source of information or knowledge, no healthy impulse that can come from without, but assimilating all these, develops according to the inner law of its being and becoming (*Swadharma*). While the third, without losing the self does not realise what it is, considers resistance to be a virtue but in its distorted *Sangskara* reacts in an imitative manner and to that extent gives a perverted expression to its confused conception of the inner law. Such being the case it is only the second type that can truly be said to have character, but in our present circumstances the majority that pass through the current educational scheme cannot be expected to conform to that type ; and there is room for much controversy as to how far the current scheme is adapted even to that end. The history of its rise and development rather points to a contrary conclusion. When, therefore, it is complained that schools in this country do not make for the training of character, it can be seriously questioned what

(a) *Ibid pp. 329-330.*

is meant by the criticism and how far the present system, devised with a definite aim and pursued with an alien policy, in total disregard of Indian values, can be exonerated and how all the blame can be imputed to those who have to give effect to the system as they have received it and are bound by cast-iron rules to follow it. High School Education in this country has really to be decontrolled if better and truly beneficial results are to be derived, and it has to be rendered free from its initial aim and dominant policy. To change merely drill for *Raibeshi* is not certainly the only reform that is required.

CHAPTER X.

THE CRY AGAINST PRIVATE MANAGEMENT.

WHY MUST PRIVATE MANAGEMENT "MAKE THE SITUATION ACUTE" ?

While cultural and educational interests demand that education should be free from official control, the officialdom here have persuaded themselves to think that education of school children should be under maximum of state control, of course, with the minimum of contribution from government funds. There are only a few government schools, and the large expenditure on them cannot be justified by results ; yet, in the opinion of the Education Department, "the immense preponderance of privately-managed aided and unaided institutions in the province makes the situation very acute." (a) Why it makes the situation acute, why private enterprise will not create more facilities for education when the Government is unable to do so, one is only left to guess the reasons—reasons if there can at all be for such warped judgment. How the management of government schools by distant agencies and men without any natural interest in the boys of the localities where such schools are situated, can be better than or can even be equal to the care and interest taken by committees of management of non-government schools composed of founders and benefactors of such institutions and of parents and guardians of boys reading in them, it is altogether unintelligible from what appears on the face of the reports,

(a) *Eighth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in Bengal (1927-32) p. 15.*

unless one is prepared to read between the lines. Leaving aside the comparatively insignificant number of government schools, about half of the high schools in Bengal are aided institutions, aided, of course, in the most miserly way, but official control over them does not represent the insignificant proportion that the aid bears to the total income or expenditure. Exercised from within and without, such control is designed to be as complete as possible, besides the academic control of the University which is admitted to be effective on all hands. The management of such schools, again, has to be done, in pursuance of a written undertaking given to maintain an approved scale of expenditure and in strict conformity with the rules and conditions laid down by the Education Department. Further, it has to be carried on by a body constituted apparently, under the University School Code, of elected representatives of parents and guardians of boys, of founders and benefactors of the school, of persons interested in education in the locality and lastly of a member nominated by the Inspector of schools.

THE EXISTING TRIPLE CONTROL OF AIDED INSTITUTIONS.

Again, the actual constitution of the committee of management of an aided school, or the election of its non-official members has to be *thrice* approved. It has to secure the approval of the University; but under the rules the Syndicate has to await the approval of the Director of Public Instruction. The Director of Public Instruction or the Inspector of schools, in his turn, has to await the only approval that really matters, viz., that of the District Magistrate. Although the connection of the District Magistrate with the transferred subject of education can nowhere be traced under the existing Government of India Act and the Devolution Rules, his approval is made by a departmental rule the very foundation on which the other approvals, necessary for proper constitution of the manag-

ing committee of a school, can possibly rest. Suppose, again, a school has an income of Rs. 750/- of which only one-fifth viz., Rs.150/- is contributed as aid by Government; then its committee of management can be constituted not only with a member nominated by the Education Department to watch over and, if possible, control the proceedings, but *all the other members,* elected to represent the interests of those who founded the school and have been contributing Rs. 600/-, i. e. four-fifths of the total income, have to be approved by the District Magistrate. The principle of election, therefore, that is made by the University the basis for the constitution of the managing committee of a school, is reduced in the case of an aided institution to a make-believe mockery. It can be termed at best a mode of nomination by the local people, so heavily interested in the school, of some candidates to constitute the managing committee, only if they be fortunate enough to meet with the District Magistrate's approval. The electors are truly speaking merely proposers of certain names, for the election is effective only if the District Magistrate allow their nominees to function.

HOW THE ELECTIVE SYSTEM INTRODUCED BY THE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL CODE HAS BEEN RENDERED A NULLITY.

So long as the so-called elected members cannot secure the District Magistrate's approval or permission, call it whatever you like, they have got to go, and the election has to be repeated under the threat of withdrawal of aid. The Revised School Code, it is fondly supposed, has given the schools a constitution, but the fact is that the university has simply to set their seal of approval to the quasi-nominated committees of District Magistrates, so far as aided schools in all Bengal outside Calcutta are concerned. It is difficult indeed to believe that the real authors of the managing committees of such schools can be those who do not come at all into the picture presented by the

Revised School Code ; for, there is no mention of the District Magistrate in the Code. The Code nowhere says that, apart from the nominee of the Education Department, the managing committees of aided high schools have to be constituted differently from those of the unaided high schools ; but in practice the *whole* managing committee of an aided high school has to be constituted with due deference to other wishes than those of the electors. The University Code provides that members duly elected by classes of persons mentioned therein "shall hold office for three years", but, in fact, the mandatory provision can be and sometimes is rendered nugatory. When the School Code was revised by the University they had little idea that such could be the unfortunate position of the aided high schools ; for the extra provisions with regard to them only required that there should be a member nominated by the Education Department on the committee of such schools, and that the Syndicate, before approving the constitution of the committee of management, would take into consideration what the Director of Public Instruction had to say in the matter. Section 6 of the Revised School Code runs thus :—

"6. The constitution of the committee of all schools shall be subject to the approval of the syndicate * * * *

"In the case of aided schools the constitution of the Managing Committee will be forwarded to the University through the Director of Public Instruction whose observations on the personnel will be considered by the Syndicate before approving of the committee."

No sooner was this provision made in the Code and the provision for a nominee of the department on the managing committee of every aided school was secured, than the educational authorities hastened to instruct the aided schools that upon the triennial election of a new

committee the names of *all* the elected members should be forwarded for the approval of the Syndicate through the Education Department *but after securing the approval of the District Magistrate.* And, in abrogation of the old rules, the following new departmental rule was also promulgated with the result that, in respect of the aided schools, the whole principle of election was rendered abortive :—

"12. In the case of high schools recognised by the University of Calcutta the provisions contained in rules 1—38 of the School Code revised by the University in 1930, shall be followed in respect of aided schools instead of the foregoing rules 1—11, subject to the following conditions :—

The constitution of the committee will require the approval of the District Magistrate in order to qualify for a grant-in-aid. The authorities of the school will apply to the District Magistrate whose duty it will be to ascertain, before giving approval, that minorities have been properly represented. The constitution of a committee as approved in accordance with the above will be intimated to the University through the Director of Public Instruction."

The reference to minority representation in the rule is only a timely touch and not surely meant to limit the discretion of the District Magistrate to that question alone. In fact it is recognised on all hands that the District Magistrate has unfettered discretion under the rule to disapprove the constitution of the whole committee or of the election of any of its numbers.

VIRTUAL RETRANSFER OF EDUCATIONAL GRANTS.

Such being the case, the rule in its operation achieves a double purpose. It not only defeats the provision for election of managing committees by electors recognised by the School Code and deprives nearly half the total number of high schools in Bengal of the general right of election conferred by the University, but circumvents the existing

Reformed constitution under which the Education Minister is voted by the legislature the money for the distribution of grants-in-aid and virtually effects a transfer of the legislature's grants from the control of the Education Department to that of the General Administration Department. As matters stand at present the distribution of grants-in-aid has become a matter for the District Magistrate's patronage.[a] A school may be a very good educational institution in the opinion of the inspecting officers of the Education Department, but, however unexceptionable educational officers may consider its work, it cannot continue to have the aid if the committee of management elected by the people directly interested in the school cannot secure the District Magistrate's approval. And the District Magistrate's certificate of approval may be withheld not simply because of insufficient representation of minorities, as the rule apparently indicates, but *for any reason whatsoever and even if he do not choose to record any.* An elected member might be suspected of sympathy with the Congress, he might not have voted for or with the sub-divisional officer at the committee meeting, he might not have been particularly alert to carry out any and every suggestion coming from the official world and so forth, his election was almost sure to be disapproved however long or beneficial might have been his services, or the school deprived of the aid if he was not abandoned. In the circumstances, the less it is said that grants are given in

(*a*) Rai Bahadur Khagendranath Mitter with his intimate knowledge of the working of the Education department and of the procedure followed in making grants-in-aid frankly remarked in his presidential address at the All Bengal Teachers' Conference at Asansole on the 31st March 1934 : "My personal experience is that there is no uniform system on which the grants-in-aid are distributed. It has sometimes a tendency to degenerate into distribution of patronage. Patronage is good when it goes by merit alone. But the point I desire to make is that it does not always go by merit."

furtherance of an education policy and not of politics of a sort, the better for the cause of truth.

THE UNRESTRICTED VETO IN NON-EDUCATIONAL AUTHORITIES.

Such was not the position, however, before the Revised School Code came into operation. Although as early as the introduction of the Montague reforms the transference of education to popular control was signalised, so far as the aided schools were concerned, by the declaration that the constitution of the managing committees of such schools was to be "subject to the approval of the District Magistrate," the ineligibility of persons who could not serve as members of "any Managing Committee of a school" used to be governed by the following rules :—

"3 (A). The following persons are not eligible to serve as members of any Managing Committee of a school viz., :—

(i) a person who is known to be opposed to the educacation of students, (a) in any Government college or school, (b) in any college or school aided by Government, (c) any college or school affiliated to, or recognised by the University of Calcutta or Dacca or any Board of Intermediate or Secondary Education which has been or may be established by Government ;

(ii) a person who has taken any part directly or indirectly in any attempt to induce any student to give up his studies in any such institution.

"3 (B). Any person who is a member of the Managing Committee of any school and who contravenes the provisions of Rule 3 (A) above may be removed from such membership by Government."

These rules were framed after the first non-co-operation movement. Whatever could be said against them they had one merit viz. of defining the disqualification of members. Now these rules stand superseded, as we have pointed out, by the comprehensive general provision made after the adoption of Revised School Code of 1930 that "the constitution of the committee will require the approval of the Dis-

trict Magistrate in order to qualify for a grant-in-aid", which again, is being construed by the Education Department itself as vesting unrestricted power of disapproval of members and committees in the District Magistrate. The more, therefore, paper provisions are being made to advertise that elective principles are being introduced in this country, the stronger is being made the counter provision for veto to nullify them. Matters educational form no exception to this general trend of affairs. What is worse is that, except in Calcutta, where there is not certainly less politics but more strength of public opinion, even this veto rests not with the Education Department and the Inspectors of schools, but with authorities who have little concern with education and no constitutional responsibility to the people of this country.

Yet, such "privately managed" aided schools even go to "make the situation very acute" ! What else can they do in the opinion of men who have no faith in the people of this country? People's money in the shape of fees and benefactions may be welcome in larger and still larger proportions, but management by their elected representatives cannot be suffered, even if carried on in the wholesome company of a nominated member and under due supervision and surveillance. Contribute they must, and liberally too, to keep the institutions going, but the right to conduct them in the best interests of their own boys they can claim only by making the situation further acute and proving themselves utterly obtuse !!

CHAPTER XI.

THE OFFENCE OF GOING UNAIDED.

Our analysis of the system under which committees of management of aided high schools are constituted and all that we have said about, what appears to us, the unconstitutional veto for eliminating members who do not enjoy the confidence of the officials of the General Administration Department, will perhaps be met by the criticism that such provisions have become necessary in view of the prevailing political distemper. But the obvious anachronism involved in such a reply must be evident to those who are aware that the District Magisrate's approval of the managing committees of such schools was made a condition precedent to grants long before there was anything like the recent developments. How far such a measure was the outcome of any unstated policy adumbrated after 1913—for the stated policy of the Government of the day was "to rely so far as possible on private enterprise in secondary education"[(a)],—how far, again, it arose out of the idea of preventing the divorce of the executive government from the educational system of the country that the transference of education as was apprehended would bring about, it is difficult to say. But, whatever may be the exact date of its promulgation, the rule for magisterial control of school committees and educational grants can have no place under the Reforms; and as a piece of reactionary incongruity, its

THE RESULT OF THE OPERATION OF THE RULE FOR EXECUTIVE APPROVAL.

(a) *Vide The Government of India Resolution of 1913.*

operation is making neither for the advancement of educational interests, nor for the promotion of academic peace. There can be no denying the fact, again, that *the rule is working in official interest and making for the consolidation of official position in the administration of the high schools.* The latest reports go to show that more schools are now being managed by committees under official influence and with official presidents than before. The last Quinquennial Report, for instance, observes with evident satisfaction that at present "The District Magistrates and Sub-Divisional Officers often act as presidents of managing committees of schools". [a] So, for the aid that is given, Government is not satisfied now with external control alone. Previously it was the practice to make a grant as a measure of benefaction and not as an instrument of control. Thereafter it came to be made on an undertaking given by the members of the managing committee of an aided school that they would see to the due application of the funds and maintain an approved scale of expenditure. They had to draw the aid on submitting monthly accounts to the Inspectors of schools who never permitted the least deviation from the scheduled scale. And not only in matters of expenditure, but in other matters also, they had to follow the departmental instructions precisely under close supervision of the Inspecting officers of the Education Department. But now all these are not considered enough. Nominated members on school committees are supposed to be an indispensable *quid pro quo* for the comparatively small grants-in-aid. Outside Calcutta, official presidents, unconnected with the Education Department, are further deemed necessary to ensure educational advance and an "atmosphere of pure study". The present position in brief is that for partial aid there

CONSOLIDATION OF OFFICIAL POSITION.

(*a*) *Eighth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in Bengal* (*1927-32*) *p. 16.*

must be full control, external as well as internal—control not merely of general policy and programme, but also of day to day administration—control, again, not of the Education Department alone, but of the executive officers into the bargain. Is it any wonder, therefore, that, on the one hand, schools that can afford will not be anxious to secure government aid and, on the other, a few aided schools now will be singled out for praise, while the whole body of unaided schools will be considered a class apart—so many objects of anxious concern—fit, without exception, to be tarred with one heavy brush? Only natural human feelings are assessed and expressed when upon the Eighth Quinquennial Review it is observed :—

> "About half of all the high schools in Bengal receive no grant from public funds". (If it was 47·5 in 1927 it was 48·7 in 1932.) "While a few of the aided schools are excellent institutions, the existence of a large number of private and especially unaided schools over which little effective control is in fact exercised is undoubtedly one of the main reasons for the low standard of the quality of secondary education in the province" [(a)].

THE UNAIDED JUDGED BY THE WEAKEST AMONG THEM.

Among the unaided institutions there are schools that did not fail to elicit appreciation from the University Commission; but how can the authors of departmental reports find words of approbation and encouragement even for the foremost among them, and give away the case for executive control? The best among them that can show results better than the best and most expensive of the government high schools, not to speak of merely the aided high schools, do not require any niggardly help and cannot, therefore, lay any claim to the aided excellence of 'a' notable 'few'. Many of the unaided, again, with just suffi-

(a) *Ibid—p. 35.*

cient resources will not care so much for aid as for autonomy in management and therefore, in the opinion of the official reviewers, can in their self-reliance only set up a "low standard of quality". The poor and the struggling among them may not be so much "assured of permanency" as to win a measured dole, but they can have condemnation enough and to spare for the unpardonable offence of preferring an alleged low standard to no-education. Such being the case, all unaided institutions *et hoc genus omne* can only deserve censure, all-round, all-inclusive censure ; and if sweeping censure, instead of disinterested support, is not potent enough to kill them, but helps them to multiply, then of course an educational policy is needed to bring down the number of high schools to one-third of their present number and give the unaided and therefore uncontrolled high schools one general notice to quit. Mothers of weaklings, they are to be judged only by the weakest among them, unless of course they are prepared to plead guilty and admit the axiomatic truth of the *ipse dixit* that little control can only mean low standard.

ARE UNAIDED HIGH SCHOOLS ABSOLUTELY UNCONTROLLED?

But are the unaided high schools really so uncontrolled from the educational and administrative points of view ? Are they really independent bodies absolutely free to pursue an unregulated career without acknowledging any superior authority and disregarding all external control ? Such was at least not the opinion of those who had experience of the educational system in this country even before the latest innovations designed for supercontrol. Says Mr. Mayhew :-

"Education in India from 1854 has meant a system of schools, colleges, and examinations, ultimately controlled by the Government". "The class, under private management, missions, local committees or private proprietors, has depended on the Government either for grants-in-aid, which give financial security, and 'recognition' which ultimately qualifies their students for

examinations and government service, or for recognition alone. Regular inspection and submission to rules and regulations governing curriculum, text-books and all details of organisation and equipment have been the conditions of such support and recognition. It is true that the provincial governments have delegated to Universities in varying measure the control or partial control of higher education by charging them with the framing of curricula and rules or the recognition of high schools or with both these tasks. But these Universities have been the creation of the Government with governing bodies constituted and controlled by Government, aware always of the Government policy as declared by officials in their governing bodies and working always with the possibility of a Government veto on their proposed regulations." *** "The ultimate power of the Government to take away what it has given has always been recognised." [(a)]

And, from another point of view, the Report of the Auxiliary Committee of the Statutory Commission observes :—

"In Bengal, the control of education can scarcely be said to have been handed over to local bodies to any appreciable extent". "The effective control by Government over secondary education is in no way limited by powers possessed by local bodies" [(b)]

How is this control exercised in practice? It is by bringing the schools within the ambit of inspection. "The Inspector of Schools, while he has jurisdiction and supervision over the whole circle, takes under his special care the Zilla and High English Schools – Government, aided and unaided" [(c)]—and the inspecting officer has instruction to 'see' among other things that "the teaching and discipline are such as to exert a right influence on the manners, the conduct and character of the pupils, so that they may be brought up as truthful, law-abiding and loyal men with due reverence for their parents and those in authority over them." [(d)] And, if such

(*a*) Arthur Mayhew : *The Education of India pp. 62-63.*
(*b*) *Hartog Report p. 317.*
(*c*) *and* (*d*) *The Bengal Education Code 1931 pp. 40, 43.*

is the general control exercised by the Government, the University exercises a control which is admitted to be "powerful, if not always immediate, effective if indirect". This latter control again has been further strengthened by the introduction of the School Code of 1930, under which no school can be conducted by a committee of management that is not elected under the rules and approved by the University as laid down in the Code. The Code, again, does not stop short with regulating the management, but lays down rules affecting certain important aspects of school administration, and as such, it has been officially considered "a distinct move in advance" on the part of the University. "All high schools are now obliged to have a managing committee constituted in accordance with the 'School Code' of the University issued in 1930". "The 'School Code' lays down rules for the management of non-government high schools and affords a common basis for the department and the University to act jointly in the control of high schools". While such is the administrative control exercised over the high schools the position regarding academic control not simply of the University but of the Government is summed up in the last Quinquennial Report thus :—

"Government prescribes the syllabus and text-books for all classes except the top classes of high schools. The University syllabus and text-books are followed in these classes. *The unaided schools are expected to adopt and, in fact, do largely adopt the departmental curricula and text-books, and the rules for admission, withdrawal, promotion and examination. The fear of forfeiting the scholarship and examination privileges secures compliance with the departmental rules.* (a)

Yet it is remarked there is "little control" over the unaided schools and the departmental demand for adequate control

(a) *Eighth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in Bengal* (*1927-32*) *p. 16.* (*Italics ours*)

is formulated by the proposal to do away with most, if not all, of them, and to retain 400 substantially aided and therefore fully controlled high schools only. It is not indeed difficult to guess the source of such a conception if we remember what Mr. Mayhew says in connection with the State control of education :—

MR. MAYHEW ON THE CHANGED MENTALITY OF THE ENGLISHMEN IN INDIA.

"The Englishman in India, outside the mercantile community, tends to become a Prussian" "in his general conception of the comprehension, responsibility, and functions of the State". "Though imbued, while on leave, with the English suspicion and dislike of the official, he fails to see when he lands at Bombay the possibility of any important work, beneficial to India as a whole, prospering without the close and earnest attention of the Government. The product of a public school or University which came into being and has grown without the help and almost without the intervention of Government, he contemplates without dismay Universities created in secretariat offices and schools managed by officials, who wear or hope to wear in the fullness of time 'political uniform' on public occasions".

* * *

"He forgot how very un-English, and, for an Englishman, dangerous and misleading, a state-controlled system of education can be. He forgot that the greatest educational institutions of his own country have been the product of slow growth, evolved experimentally in response to the growing self-consciousness of a community, and reflecting its internal aspirations and ideas rather than the clearly defined purpose of an external authority". "He forgot" *** "that the very foundations of a state system, still far from completely comprehensive, were laid only in 1870. Even the beginnings of such a system were possible in England only after nearly forty years of a reformed Parliament had made the minister in charge of the attempted system responsible to a body that represented all the important elements of national life". [a]

(a) Arthur Mayhew : *The Education of India pp. 64-65.*

THE POSITION IN ENGLAND.

And still in England it was nothing like committing the high schools to the care and management of the officials and the approved of the Home Department. As the University Commission summarised the present position there,

"The value of independent initiative was still appreciated : the excellence of many private schools was cordially recognised : variety of educational types was desired ; and neither Government nor public opinion showed any disposition to declare, as the Government of Prussia had declared in 1794, that 'all educational institutions are to be under the supervision of the State and are subject at all times to its examination and inspection'." (a)

But Bengal under the Reforms bids fair to be guided by a Prussian policy and even to improve upon the old Prussian declaration by adding 'management' to 'supervision', 'examination' and 'inspection'.

(a) *Calcutta University Commission Report (1917-19) Vol. I. Ch. IV. p. 95.*

CHAPTER XII.

MR. MAYHEW'S PROPHECY AND CONCLUSION.

MR. MAYHEW ON GOVERNMENT'S FUNCTION IN THE SPHERE OF EDUCATION.

Mr. Mayhew was an experienced member of the Indian Educational service. He was a provincial Director of Public Instruction and earned his Companionship of the order of the Indian Empire too. Neither an Indian nor a politician of questionable complexion, he expressed his conviction, upon a review of the History of the British Indian Educational policy from 1835 to 1920, thus :—

"Higher education in India depends for warmth and colour, vitality and response to communal aspirations, on the measure of its freedom from the control and direction of any form of Government whether Indian or alien. The function of Government in this sphere is to suppress what is harmful to the common weal and to support with the utmost elasticity, whatever is useful and effective". [a]

And if he so expressed himself in the Introduction to his book, in the Epilogue he indulged in a bit of prophecy, not of course without a hit against Indian mentality.

HIS PROPHECY.

"It seems, however, only too probable that the provincial Governments will intensify rather than relax their control of higher Education. India does not shrink from bureaucracy. Such protest against State control as was voiced under the old regime was caused, not by official interference, but by the supposed alien nature of officialdom" [b]

(a) Arthur Mayhew : *The Education of India* p. 4.
(b) *Ibid.* p. 284.

Since the inauguration of the Reforms, instead of any relaxation, there has been a strengthening of control indeed, and that surely not on the broadest lines. For what Mr. Mayhew understood by 'elasticity' he did not leave unexplained when he said : "there must be no attempt to define or elaborate what is implied by broad conditions" and "recognition and aid must not depend on compliance with any code or adoption of any course". We have seen that for recognition and aid not only there has been insistence on compliance with a code and on adoption of a course, but even on the acceptance of an officially approved committee of management. Nay, acceptance of something more than a code, a course and a committee, even submission to such orders as to make provision for teaching and examination on all sorts of pamphlets issued by the Publicity Department are sometimes deemed essential for the continuance of aid.

MORE THAN FULFILLED.

Mr. Mayhew, therefore, has to be recognised as a good prophet although his prophecy was based on a wrong appreciation of the Indian character and of the situation brought about by the Montague Reforms. The fact is not that "India does not shrink from bureaucracy," but that bureaucracy is not prepared to relax its hold even on the so-called transferred subjects. Knowing that India in pre-British days scarcely had anything like departmentalised education under bureaucratic or autocratic control and seeing that transference of education under the Montague Reforms was reduced to a mere paper provision, if not to a definitely *benami* transaction, he should have looked for reasons of tightening state-control somewhere else, and we are sure, with a little wider vision he would have easily found the doctrine of state-control to be an imported cult so far as India and the Indians are concerned.

Indeed, the very ideas that education can be used for the purpose of political propaganda and that the state can use it as an instrument to serve its ends are too secular and modern to arise in the orient. They proceed from an apotheosis of the state or worship of certain political principles and are as chauvinistic in character as materialistic in outlook. They postulate that cultures are things to be defended or imposed by the sword and are involved in the same way in the struggle for existence as the whole world of life is, and, what is more, that it is the preoccupation and duty of man and his institutions to participate and prevail in the struggle and not so much their privilege to rise above it.

STATE CONTROL OR POLITICAL USE OF EDUCATION —A FOREIGN CULT.

These, again, are the ideas that have found their chief protagonists in the west and have enabled the western nations to achieve material success in their national lives and endeavours. The most outstanding instance of the cultivation and realisation of such ideas in pre-war Europe was furnished by Germany. Not very many decades passed between Jena and Sedan and the faith that Germany acquired through her state-controlled education not only made her great in her victory in the last century but proved strong enough to carry her through the Great War and belie all forecast about her dissolution in the wake of her defeat. It was not for nothing that German school boys were educated to define Germany as "a land entirely surrounded by enemies" and with such education it could not be a matter for surprise if in 1914 "the difficulty of defending eastern Prussia against Russian attack was no less known to the children in the benches of the primary schools than it was to the Imperial War College at Berlin." [a] And not only the teaching of geography but even that of history

HOW IT HAS COME TO PREVAIL IN THE WEST.

(a) Edward H. Reisner : *Nationalism and Education since 1789* quoted by Thomas H. Briggs in *The Great Investment* p. 70.

was subjected to the "pragmatic as opposed to the scientific conception" of teaching. The German school boys were not to learn historical facts as they were but as they were represented and interpreted in the interests of the state. And if geography and history could be subjected to such treatment it could be easily imagined what a strong patriotic bias could be given to the teaching of a literature replete with patriotic poems and with music ringing with devotion to the Fatherland There is nothing to prevent the ideas being pressed into the service of a particular political philosophy adopted by a state, such as Bolshevism or Fascism, as they are being done to-day in Russia and Italy respectively. In fact the pre-war German process could well be considered "fitful" as compared with the post-revolutionary Russian. "Hegelianism, the philosophy which made Prussia into a world power, never had in Germany the exclusive platform" (of course before the advent of Hitlerism) "which historic materialism has in to-day's Russia". "The child is made conscious of the collective fróm earliest kindergarten". "All education has the need of the Soviet state for a trained and state-conscious proletarian class, constantly and practically in mind. Every lesson whether in arithmetic, geography or history, a simple reading lesson or one in elementary science, tries to teach a political lesson." "And whereas the Soviet state is represented in the child's mind as the consummation of history, he is constantly reminded that his co-operation is necessary for the full fruition of the dream".[a] Under the Fascists Italy too has learnt how to make the most political use of education. Recently the Secretary of the Fascist party said : "The liberal University, where existed the greatest coquetry of intellectual liberty, socialism and philosophy; where one could teach anti-clericalism, anti-colonialism,

(*a*) Dorothy Thompson (Mrs. Sinclair Lewis) : *New Russia. pp. 218, 219, 241-42.*

renunciation, anti-militarism, and the like" "ought to die".

"Accompanying this statement was an order that 'no professor may teach in the higher schools of Italy unless he is approved by the Fascist party' which is the Government, 'and given a tessera a little booklet on the order of a passport. And this tessera is not given unless the instructor declares himself in full accord with the principles of Mussolini's government'. More than this, the teachers are required to be active in the Fascisti and propagandists for their doctrines". [a]

HOW IT SPREAD TO OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

These examples and inspirations from the European countries have crossed oceans and continents. In Japan the Shinto religion and Mikado worship are regular and unquestionable parts of the educational programme, and a cry has been raised that democratic Americanisation also demands that education should be pursued in the interests of the state.

"Democracy is not 'a utopia of escape' but a concatenation of opportunities for service. It can succeed only as this fact is perceived and as education is provided that sets up the proper attitude in young citizens and prepares them for such services to the state, indirect, as well as direct, as each is competent to perform". [b]

Such a view of education, in the interests above all of the democratic state, is not of course widely adopted in England, and politics or absolute state-control in education is, we are given to understand, hardly tolerated there. We have quoted before the description of the position in England as given by the University Commission. But that does not mean that an un-English precedent will not be pursued in India if it can ensure state-control. In fact the German model minus, of course, the appeal to patriotism has not only been adopted here in making the classes as units in our school system, but in framing the curricula, the Prussian idea of doing state propaganda through them has also been

(a) Thomas H. Briggs: *The Great Investment* (*Inglis Lecture 1930*) *pp. 75-76.*
(b) *Ibid. p. 12.*

followed to a great extent since the beginning of the current century. Not only we have had history made to order, but since Lord Curzon's time we have been receiving training in good citizenship from texts like Lee Warner's "Citizen of India". It is Mr. Mayhew's observation that:

A CURZON CONTRIBUTION.

"Lord Curzon did more than any other ruler of India since Bentinck's time to stamp the educational policy with his own characteristics. What he believed was taught in school and college for the first fifteen years of this century". (a)

With the introduction of the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms this policy hardly received any new orientation, for it was not intended that it ever should. On the contrary, it gained a new impetus and came to be pursued more frankly, though apparently, in support of the Reformed regime which started amidst nation-wide distrust and disappointment. The exigencies of the political situation demanded political propaganda of the approved type within the walls of the schools, but primed propaganda could hardly find favour with the boys. The very feelings of patriotism that are encouraged and exploited in the west and are made the peg to hang state propaganda on, are not only given a wide berth here but are tabooed as pernicious. Discussion of politics of a sort permitted, but the least participation in current politics, even if playful, sternly punished, such was the unenviable position in which the students found themselves.

PRIMED PROPAGANDA.

"It was more difficult," Mr. Mayhew admits, "to provide an answer from 1918 onwards, when officials and quasi-officials were entrusted with the great work of dispelling political apathy and swelling the ranks of the politically minded. A radical change in secretariat phraseology imposed on school masters and professors the herculean task not only of explaining the mystic significance of Dyarchy but of distinguishing evolution from revolution and explaining at what stage a determination to

(a) Arthur Mayhew: *The Education of India.* p. 111.

achieve Dominion status passes into Bolshevist tendencies. In debating societies, school papers, and periods devoted in the time-tables to 'current events', masters and pupils began to think politically and furiously, masters began to express, not perhaps the results of their meditations, but *what they thought inspectors would like* the results to be, and pupils began to wonder whether perhaps there were other aspects of the problem which could be discussed with less reserve and more zest outside the scholastic area." (a)

In this atmosphere of unreality, where there was no large sentiment either for the teachers to work on or for the students to get hold of, what could thrive but the pretence of civic training on the one hand and the art of keeping up appearances on the other? All spirit of enquiry suppressed, sincerity undermined, enthusiasm eliminated, there remained only working out within the framework of a departmental code a lifeless programme imposed from above—a programme that took into consideration the intellect alone and was based on a compartmental theory of mind. The education, again, was altogether unrelated with the larger life outside the school unless the relation was one of contradiction and negation or of suspicion and strife. Peace and harmony so essential and necessary to make education successful and true—peace that comes out of the co-ordinated development of all the mental functions, and harmony that arises out of the adjustment of the mind and its environment—came to be missed more and more. Much labour with poor success could only be the natural outcome of such a programme and pursuit; and large-scale futility yielded place to discord internal as well as external. But some good came out of it, although it came by way of antithesis, nor did it fail to point a moral.

IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF UNREALITY.

(a) *Ibid. pp. 131-32.*

And we have on record, again, the conclusion of the same Mr. Mayhew :

"The strife between educationalists and politicians for the students' soul has brought school and college into closer touch with India's needs and aspirations. But an abiding peace seems improbable until a type of higher education less exposed to suspicion, and freed from the web of official life, has been evolved." [a]

(a) *Ibid.* p 141.

PART: 3.

SURVEY AND SOUNDING.

CHAPTER XIII.

SECONDARY EDUCATION VERSUS SPECIALIZATION.

Based on the assumption that four hundred high schools would suffice for upper grade secondary education in Bengal, the scheme laid before the Education Conference was not only designed to make such schools much more rare and remote in future, but was calculated, as we have pointed out, to strike down the large majority of high schools situated in rural Bengal and change the general character of the remaining few from day-schools to boarding institutions with the unhappy prospects indicated before. The effect of such a scheme can only be restrictive, viz., to check the advance of high education and limit artificially the progress of scholastic education beyond the M. E. standard. Yet, *our high school stage*, comprising classes VII to X, *includes subjects that all should learn* and offers informational studies and abstract training of which all students of twelve to fifteen years should, in the absence of better things, avail themselves. The curricula do not include anything more than the very minimum requirements of liberal education, and *even if the present facilities be denied there can only be a definite lowering of the general intellectual level attained by the province.*

OUR HIGH SCHOOL STAGE INCLUDES ONLY MATTERS THAT ALL SHOULD LEARN

The necessity for such a minimum range of liberal studies and cultural discipline in the secondary stage has, however,

THE NECESSITY OF GENERAL EDUCATION UP TO THE FIFTEENTH OR THE SIXTEENTH YEAR.

been recognised in all advanced countries. In fact, secondary education itself has come to be defined as a type of education "the fundamental idea of which can only be expressed" by "the elusive name of humanism or liberal education".[(a)] Again, its proper function has always been considered to be the completion of elementary education and suitable preparation for the university stage or vocational training. In its scope it ought to include, therefore, those matters which all should learn, and but for which knowledge and discipline a man would be capable neither of understanding nor conducting himself intelligently in the world around him. When, therefore, a boy may leave the secondary school has been a perennial subject of discussion among educationists in all progressive countries ; and in some (rich countries), education of this standard has come to be considered so indispensable that the state has been anxious to provide for free and universal secondary education. Where universal secondary education has not yet come into vogue, there also ,

"It is recognised generally that an elementary education furnishes an inadequate preparation for life in the complex society of to-day whether viewed as a preparation for citizenship and its problems, or for vocational purposes, or even for mere understanding of the world as it is. Further the greatest menace which confronts modern societies comes from the unemployment of youth left to itself and without any educational supervision. Finally, nations have begun to realize that in an exclusive system of secondary education, a vast amount of talent is lost at a time when the world calls for the leadership of the best minds wherever they can be found." [(b)] .

Even before such social and political ideas came to dominate people's minds, educationists purely from the psycho-

(*a*) R. F. Cholmeley in *The Schools of England, Chap. V. p.* 93.

(*b*) Isaac L. Kandel : *The Dilemma of Democracy* (*Inglis Lecture, 1934*) *p. 15.*

logical standpoint, came to consider that all students should have general education, up till the *sixteenth year*. Thus, in Mr. Barnett's 'Teaching and Organisation' (with special reference to secondary schools), we find Mr. Glazebrook expressing his very definite opinion :

> "There are two obvious turning points in the life of an ordinary boy ; one at about fourteen, when he grows out of the child into the boy, the other at about eighteen, when he grows out of the boy into the youngman. No one I imagine, would propose to end the wider education at the earlier of these epochs. The general practice of England and other countries, which fixes the time of leaving school as the extreme limit of general education, may be taken as the verdict of common sense, to question which would not serve any practical purpose. What we school masters have to consider is whether there is a point before a boy leaves school at which he becomes ripe for 'specialisation.' In answer to such questiou one would like to give a reasoned statement ; but in a matter of practical experience it is difficult to do more than state the result of one's own observation. Circumstances have given me unusual opportunities of observing the effects of different systems, and the following is the conclusion at which I have arrived. *Up to the age of sixteen all boys ought to be kept rigidly to the full school course*" [(a)]

Such a view is not confined now to individuals. It has come to be so generally held in England that, while in 1925 the House of Commons passed a resolution that local education authorities should make early and adequate provision for secondary education "for all children up to the age of 16", the Hadow Report proposed to raise the compulsory school age to 15 i.e., the same year at the end of which our students become eligible for appearing at the Matriculation Examination.

(*a*) Chapter on 'Specialization' *p. 336* (*Italics ours*)

THE AGE FOR SPECIALIZATION

As regards the proper age for specialization, even present-day writers like Mr. Russell, who maintain that with better methods of teaching it is possible now to learn more in childhood, are of opinion that 'specialization' cannot come before the age of fourteen and that "in the main, the things taught at school before the age of fourteen should be among those that every one ought to learn." Holding that "it should, however, be one of the aims of education before fourteen to discover special aptitudes in boys and girls, so that, where they exist, they may be carefully developed in the *later* years," [a] Mr. Russell definitely states :

> "*After the summer holidays in the fifteenth year,. I shall assume that a boy or girl who so desires is allowed to specialize,* and that this will be done in a large proportion of cases. *But where there is no definite preference, it will be better to prolong an all-round education.*" "As a general rule, pupils of more than average intelligence should begin to specialize at about fourteen, while pupils of less than average intelligence should usually not specialize at all at school." [b].

Regardless of such views the authors of the new scheme here in Bengal would, either make it difficult for boys of eleven or twelve years to proceed further with "all-round" or general education and thus cut short the "full school course", or break up the school curriculum and introduce fundamental division in the subjects of study prescribed for standards VII to X. The lack of general knowledge from which the 'matriculates' now-a-days suffer, owing to the exclusion of history, geography and science from the 'compulsory list', often comes in for strong comment from well-informed persons. That lack of general knowledge will only be intensified if the scheme of bifurcation of the school syllabus into

(*a*) Bertrand Russell : *On Education, p. 205.*
(*b*) *Ibid p. 217* (*Italics ours*)

classical and modern courses be introduced, as suggested, in the secondary stage; and it will be nothing but stunting the growth of young minds if even the existing facilities for a general course of study up to the end of the fifteenth year (i.e., the prescribed age for Matriculation Examination in this country), be withdrawn or limited, as under the outlined scheme of 400 schools they are bound to be.

THE OBSERVATIONS OF THE HARTOG COMMITTEE EXAMINED.

Here we shall, perhaps, be confronted with the suggestion made by the Hartog Committee that the highest form of the middle stage should be made "the great clearing house". [a] Let us state at once that in our view therein lies the mischief of the latest political examination of our educational systems. If such an opinion, at variance with the prevailing movements in western countries, were not informed by political bias against the advance of high education in this country, it could either have been inspired by the desire to strike a mean for all India, when on examination it was found that there was a great difference in the progress of secondary education in the various provinces, or could have proceeded from a failure to take into account the importance

(*a*) Since the above expression of opinion by the Hartog Committee the cry is being echoed and re-echoed in the official reports throughout India, as if under a general inspiration, and the Tenth Quinquennial Review on Progress of Education in India (1927-32) has definitely committed itself to the proposition (P. 102). "Its completion" (i.e., the completion of the lower secondary or what is called Middle stage in Bengal) the Review says, "should be marked by an *examination* which would be a clearing house for those requiring further preparation for admission to a university in higher secondary schools" (it is a travesty of language for the object evidently is to withhold the lineclear signal and to create an efficiency bar) "as well as for those who would be diverted to vocational training" (even before the proper age for it is reached). It is worthy of note that while "to most educationists" in England "the idea of all boys being submitted to a written examination" "at the age of thirteen is" going to be "abhorrent", Educational 'experts' here are anxious to see that there should be an examination at the end of the middle stage. We refrain from further developing and criticising this point because it does not come within the scope of our principal subject of discussion.

of the great advance made by high school education in Bengal. Conditions in Bengal, unique as they were found to be, surely demanded special consideration and better suggestion for consolidation of the grounds gained and for advance upon the position secured. To ignore them and prescribe similar lines of treatment for infants and adults in the matter of the growth of high school education, is not to indicate adequate grasp of the facts and requirements of the subjects dealt with. Yet, it will be doing less than justice to the Committee to take their report as an authority for any scheme to reduce the existing scope and facilities for higher secondary education. The report itself contains a clear warning against such an interpretation of their views and further says that "*all pupils, whatever be their aim of life should first receive general education*, but it should be open to boys *at some suitable stage* in the subsequent course to leave off to craft schools or to vocational classes". [a] Unless the Committee were insensible to "the tragic paradox of a situation" that came to prevail in England in which from year to year some 450,000 young lives were being poured into industry at a time when industry could not find employment for its adult workers, and missed one of the main questions that concerned the Hadow Committee, it must be said their idea was, not so much to create bars against advance on general lines and limit the scope of liberal education, as to suggest the creation of definite courses of instruction and of new facilities for prevocational training. It was, indeed, a regrettable feature of our educational system, and it attracted their comment, that "only in a few cases is this (prevocational) instruction imparted in such a manner and at such a stage of the school course that pupils are definitely encouraged, after receiving a suitable measure of general education, to leave school in order to take up some prac-

(a) *Hartog Report p. 111. (Italics ours)*

tical occupation or to receive technical instruction in a special institution."[a] There were men, of course, anxious to tell them that practical and vocational courses, scientific and industrial training, were not in demand in this country, or rather, were not appreciated by the students here; but the Committee were perhaps more conscious than the critics that such had been the initial drawback in many countries that took pride in their material advancement now. It is good for such critics to know or to be reminded of it, and we propose to indicate briefly here the history of the development of scientific and technical training in the secondary education of England.

(*a*) *Ibid p. 111.*

CHAPTER XIV.

A PAGE FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

HOW SCIENTIFIC EDUCATION IN THE SECONDARY STAGE DEVELOPED IN ENGLAND.

Whatever may be the position now, scientific and technical training was a matter of comparatively recent growth in England and did not precede but follow the great Industrial Revolution. The Clarendon Commission that was appointed in 1861 to enquire into the nine leading Public Schools (viz., Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Winchester, Westminister, Shewsbury, Charterhouse, St. Paul's and Merchant Taylors') and reported in 1864, found "there was little systematic teaching of either History or Geography at any of the nine Public Schools" far less of "Natural Science which was practically excluded".[a] The Taunton Commission, appointed in 1864 to enquire into education given in secondary schools not included in the previous commissions, also reported that the secondary boarding schools were chiefly for the upper classes, the supply of the three grades of day schools was "very small", "very insufficient", "very poor" and "there was almost total absence of any education in science or studies other than classical".[b] The Department of Science and Art was functioning from before, but isolated experiments that were tried in aiding the establishment of local science schools in selected localities resulted in the survival of only four such schools in 1859. Consequently a new method had to be adopted

(a) Graham Balfour : *Educational System* p. 147.
(b) *Ibid.*

and it was no other than to reward on a large scale teachers and students of science, and to make liberal grants to schools for books and apparatus. Even attendance grants to students came to be introduced later with the creation of a special order of classes known as Organised Science Schools in 1872. Still the growth of such schools was very slow and they could not continue to abjure literary subjects altogether. In fact, compulsory literary subjects had to be introduced into all Organised Science Day Schools by the end of the last century.

GROWTH OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN ENGLAND

Not materially different was the story of the growth of technical education in England. There was great want of any systematic provision for such education in the first half of the nineteenth century, though, after the Industrial Revolution, workers came more and more to evince a desire for scientific and mechanical knowledge. Want of a good secondary education and of preparatory teaching proved a great handicap. The International Exhibition of 1851 in Hyde Park showed a remarkable lack of training in the British manufacturers and the exhibition of 1862 followed to bring it further home. Germany, united and strengthened after the successful war of 1870, became with her education a formidable rival in trade. To improve the position of technical education, therefore, the Samuelson Commission was appointed in 1880. In their report (1884) the Commissioners pointed out, among other things,

"The need of a number of good secondary schools of the modern type and declared that legislation was necessary to enable localities to found and support technical and secondary schools." [(a)]

Within a few years the Local Taxation Act of 1890 allotted to England and Wales a large sum annually out of

(a) *Ibid p. 165.*

the Customs and Excise duties, to enable counties and county boroughs to make adequate contributions towards the improvement of technical education. Out of this money, which came to be known popularly as "Whiskey money", larger and yet larger subsidies were granted for the advancement of technical education, so that the total contribution from this source alone rose from £472,560 in 1892-93 to £863,847 in 1900-01, and went to supplement the local rates imposed under the Technical Instruction Acts then in force.

Thus they had to lure people out of the beaten track. Neither by threat nor by thwarting was the object gained. Not by disparagement and curtailing opportunities for the one, but by diversion and creating facilities for the other at a heavy cost, that general education and vocational efficiency were ultimately secured. Again, shops wanted schools and schools found shops and the co-operation of both prevented futile pursuits and ensured advance on utilitarian lines.

SECONDARY EDUCATION ESSENTIAL FOUNDATION FOR VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL TRAINING.

But advance on utilitarian lines alone could not long cope with the necessities of the situation that was developing with the expansion of mechanised industries. To counteract the dehumanising influence of the machine, it came to be demanded more and more that the worker was to be recognised not as an insignificant part of a great machine, a mere wage earner, but "as a human being with natural and social inheritance of ideas and emotion." "The internal history of England during the last half century has been" as Mr, Whitehead puts it, "an endeavour slowly and painfully to undo the evils wrought in the first stage of the new epoch" introduced by the Industrial Revolution. Political considerations such as the safety and the interests of democracy, again, required that the worker should also have

proper education as "a citizen in the training." Moreover, "as the movement for technical education grew, it was realised that the more advanced form of technical instruction could be founded only on the basis of secondary school education".[(a)] If the Education Act of 1902, therefore, "laid the foundations of a national system of high education", "the Act of 1918 for the first time, clearly established the principle that *a sound education of secondary grade is the essential foundation for specific vocational training*".[(b)] So much was felt the necessity of educating the workers that the Act also provided for compulsory attendance at Day Continuation Schools of young persons *who had not the advantage of full time instruction until the age of sixteen.* With such changes in the outlook, new ideas regarding the Day Continuation Schools also emerged, and their programme came to include larger provision for cultural education. It is even demanded now that a Day Continuation School "must reveal" to the students "not only their place and their responsibilities in the world of to-day, but also their heritage from times past in history, literature and art. It must provide worthy and acceptable ideals for their leisure time."[(c)] With such ideas gaining ground, not only it is coming to be recognised that "a sound general education is an essential preliminary to technical education"; "but that" the latter "must be developed, *in all its stages,* in close association with the other branches of post-primary or secondary and university education".[(d)] Thus the theory that there is a mortal conflict between these forms of education, and that technical education can only develop at the sacrifice of general education, is going fast to the scrap-heap.

(*a*) *"The Schools of England" Ch. VIII. p. 175.*
(*b*) *Ibid. p 175* (*Italics ours*)
(*c*) *Ibid. p. 186*
(*d*) *Ibid. p. 180* (*Italics ours*)

CHAPTER XV.

A LEAF OUT OF AMERICA

THE PROPER AGE FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION.

The curriculum for our high schools is framed to impart education to pupils up to the end of the fifteenth year when the period for specialization just begins. When, therefore, it is suggested that school students here should not be anxious to pass the Matriculation Examination but, leaving aside general education, should turn earlier to vocational training, such a suggestion can only proceed either from an ignorance of inner necessity or from an incorrect idea of the scope and requirements of vocational education. Vocational instruction, as a highly specialized form of education, must await the proper age for specialization, and in previous chapters we have quoted British opinions expressed either from general consideration or out of regard for the special requirements of technical education. While with due regard for psychological and moral, social and political requirements writers have insisted that general education should go on up till the sixteenth year, if not beyond it, from the stand point of vocational education in particular, "most educators agree that no kind of strictly vocational education of any institutional character should be given before the age of fourteen."[a] In America, the land of new experiments for intensive general education and of new enthusiasm for vocational instruction, enthusiasm not measured of course by torrents of non-paying advice, they do not think of

(a) A. F. Payne: *Administration of Vocational Education p. 137.*

starting vocational education except *after the age of fourteen.* Thus the Smith-Hughes Act says that such education shall be designed to meet the needs of persons *over* fourteen years of age who are preparing for agriculture, trade or industrial pursuit, and of pupils of *sixteen years and above* going for (Industrial) evening classes. In countries where the curriculum for secondary education is framed to provide education up till the close of the fifteenth year there can be no possible conflict, therefore, with a rational system of vocational education, and the programmes for general and special (technical) education need not necessarily interfere with one another. The result of premature weaning away of boys from courses of liberal instruction can only be defective equipment of the human mind; and where economic considerations have led to the establishment of Junior Technical schools the provisions for off-time or part-time education on liberal lines through Day Continuation schools etc. have had to be made to cure the defects of early departure and ill-balanced education, and help the intellectual and moral growth of the workers.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION DOES NOT IGNORE THE DEMANDS FOR GENERAL EDUCATION.

Indeed, in all materially advanced countries it is now coming to be recognised, as we have seen it recognised in England, that "vocational education does not of necessity imply that the individual shall not also become essentially cultured and fundamentally moralised or be in any sense less of a good citizen." "The promotion of health, preparation for worthy home membership, civic intelligence and efficiency, the better utilisation of leisure and ethical development"—"all these objectives" "are evidently as important for the young worker" [(a)] as for those who receive general education. In writing on "Learning to Earn" Lapp and Mote truly observe that "in Democracy the

(*a*) Observation of the N. E. A. Commission quoted by Mr. Payne in his *Administration of Vocational Education*, p. 15.

problem of universal education is twofold. While preparing all people to make a living and to live, the educational system must also keep open the way for the humblest to attain the very highest plane which he is capable of reaching" [a]. "The public school system", says Mr. Payne, "of a democracy with its democratic form of education must be organized in such a manner as to offer full and free opportunity for each individual to be educated to the limit of his potentialities, whatever they may be, so far as it is justifiable from the standpoint of his service to society"[b]. We do not see any valid reason, therefore, for discouraging our high school education, or for holding that in the interests of vocational education what is required is only a "modicum of general education" as experts in the Indian Educational service have apparently persuaded themselves to believe. Those who desire to see less crowd in the Universities of students who, in their opinion, ought not to seek higher education should take care to see that provision is made for pre-vocational training and post-matriculation vocational education on a large scale. Not to speak of any organised system of vocational education, when there is hardly any system of even pre-vocational training in vogue here, such as the Russell-Bonser plan, that Ettinger plan, the Pittsburg combination and the Gary plans provide in America, it is worse than useless to raise a hue and cry witnessing a surging crowd at or within the University gate. Or, if Governments, central and provincial, in this country cannot find means to provide adequately for the organisation and encouragement of vocational education, and if industries here have not been so organised as to absorb a large

(*a*) *P. 33.*

(*b*) A. F. Payne: *Administration of Vocational Education, p. 16.*

number of technically trained men, the outcry against the existing programme of general education and 'drift towards graduation' should cease for the present. It would be a bad policy, indeed, to add an empty mind to an empty stomach as one of the Ex-Vice-Chancellors of the University pointed out the other day. [a]

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: HOW THEY ORGANISED IT IN AMERICA.

If merely vociferous criticism of general education could ensure vocational instructions and knowledge the matter would have been different, but something more than a paper scheme or feeble start with industrial training is necessary. Nation-building has been in the Indian air since 1919, yet how little has been done to train the people to make a living, to help an average boy "to bear his own economic load and produce a surplus"! Not many years before the enactment of the Montagu Reforms, to be precise a couple of years earlier, the Government of the U. S. A. passed the Smith-Hughes Act. The great war was not yet at an end, yet the Federal Government could not feel satisfied with what the States or the industries were doing to develop vocational education. It went forward to formulate "four fundamental ideas" :-

"First, that vocational education being essential to the national welfare, it is the function of the National Government to stimulate the States to develop and maintain this service; second, that Federal funds are required to adjust equitably among the States the burden of providing the service; third, that since the Federal Government is vitally interested in the success of vocational education, it should, so to speak, purchase a degree of participation in this work; and fourth, that only by creating such a relationship between the central and the

(*a*) The reference is here to Dr. Urquhart's lecture delivered at a meeting of the Rotary Club, Calcutta, on 4th Nov. 1933, in course of which he said: "When the stomach is empty there is no particular advantage in having the mind empty also."

local Government can better and more uniform standards of educational efficiency be set up" [a]

THE (AMERICAN) VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ACT.

The ideas, however, did not remain a pious wish nor the subject matter of resolutions in cold print, but soon they were translated into action. How serious the American Government was in its effort to tackle such education could be indicated best by summarising some of the provisions of the Vocational Education Act of 1917. The preamble to this Act, the controlling purpose of which is such education as will make persons above fourteen fit for useful employment, says that the sums provided in Sections 2, 3 and 4 of this Act are to be paid to the States for the purpose of co-operating with them in paying the salaries of teachers, supervisors and directors of agricultural subjects, and teachers of trade, home economics, and industrial subjects and the training of teachers of such subjects, and for the purpose of making studies, investigations and reports to aid in the organisation and conduct of vocational education Section 2 provides that the aforesaid grants for agricultural subjects should be $ 500,000 for 1918 rising ultimately to $ 3,000,000 for 1926 and for eveiy year thereafter. Section 3 similarly provides for grants for trade, home economics and industrial subjects beginning with $ 500,000 for 1918 and steadily rising to $ 3,000,000 for 1926 and annually thereafter. Section 4 makes a provision for teachers' training appropriating $ 500,000 for 1918 and steadily increasing the sum to $ 1,000,000 for 1921 and for every subseqent year. By Section 7 another sum of $ 200,000 was appropriated to the Federal board for making studies, investigations and reports and paying establishment charges in that connection. And, not

(a) A. F. Payne: *Administration of Vocational Education,* p. 71.

content with these provisions, the Federal Government insisted in Section 9 of the law on a dollar for dollar contribution from the aided States or local agencies. What could be the outcome of such serious efforts on the part of a great Government that will not consider Army as the only central subject and police and jail and general administration as the only provincial departments for which money "must be found"? Within nine years i.e. by 1926, 900,000 pupils were found receiving this effective education.

ORGANISATIONS OUTSIDE THE ACT.

While such is the provision for vocational education below college grade, that of the higher grade also is well cared for. With justifiable pride an American writer observes "our large Universities with their splendidly equipped schools of law, medicine, dentistry, agriculture, education, pharmacy, business, music and art, are nothing more or less than huge vocational schools of college grade".

Besides the State arrangement for vocational education there are the corporation schools as well, which are maintained by business concerns, independently of outside control, for the better training of their employees. Beginning with what are called the Vestibule schools and Threshold schools, there are the Plant schools more commonly called the Training Departments, as well as Apprentice courses, the Upgrading schools, and Foremanship classes. The great industries there not being generally under foreign control, co-operative courses of training, based upon agreement between the schools and the employers, whereby one half of the student's time is spent in schools and the other half in employments, have been possible on a large scale. The most notable examples of this co-operative vocational training were those furnished by the University of Cincinnati and Antioch College; and apropos mention might be made of the co-operative courses maintained at the City College

of New York and those offered by 'All-day Unit Trade classes.'

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION NOT MEANT FOR WASTE PRODUCTS OF SCHOOLS.

Here among persons who ought to know better, there is an idea that intelligent and meritorious students ought to go in for general education and it is only with the waste products of the regular schools that vocational education has to deal. Such an idea does little credit to their appreciation of the requirements of vocational education. Education of this type is not really intended for students below par, but 'should command the best efforts of normal pupils.' "Experience shows," as a bulletin of the (U. S. A) Federal Board for Vocational Education declared, "that pupils failing to make normal progress in the elementary schools rarely do satisfactory work in industrial schools".

We have made, perhaps, a longer digression than is necessary to indicate that regular school education does not stand in inimical relation to vocational education. However, the point we desire to make is that our Matriculation standard can be made 'a great clearing house' for such a diversion. Vocational education is, indeed, a positive programme and can only be initiated, maintained and developed with a comprehensive plan, liberal state-aid, expert guidance and large scope for practical work and employment. Not by merely presenting a negative attitude towards one form of education can the other be secured.

CHAPTER XVI.

MONEY AND METHODOLOGY CONSTITUTE NO GUARANTEE IN HUMANISTIC EDUCATION.

Denunciation and destructive criticism of our high schools and their performance, we have been hearing so often of late that an impression may easily be produced that ours is the only country in this wide world where such a system has not achieved the very best of results. The lines of criticism, again, suggest that if only the schools could attract more expenditure from the people, if the machinery and technique could be further improved, and the system could be brought under closer official control and administrative supervision, the question of the progress of high school education would be automatically solved. If real advance in education could be ensured and the best of results obtained only by large outlay, big buildings, plenty of equipments, 'trained' teachers, intensified inspection and departmental supervision minus clear thinking, personal interest, genuine enthusiasm, all round seriousness and anxiety to advance essentially human interests, the matter would be different indeed. None of the requirements that alien ideas and guidance would insist on, is lacking in many advanced countries, yet complete elimination of such undesirable results as are made the texts for screamy comments here could hardly be secured in them.

AMERICAN ADVANCE IN SECONDARY EDUCATION.

Take for instance, the case of the United States of America. In a recent Inglis lecture it is observed :

"During the past generation there has been in the United States such a development of education, specially on the secondary school level, as the world has never previously seen. We are amazed and proud as we contemplate the twenty-odd thousand high schools, many of them magnificently housed, equipment that compares favourably with that of colleges, the more than four million students that are enrolled and retained as never before, the laws that extend the privilege of free attendance even beyond the school districts, the improved skills of teachers, the better personal relations with students" "the recognition of the importance of the extra curricula activities and their direction, and the increased importance of such subjects as general science, music, fine arts and industrial education. We have seen, too, development towards a science of education, with objective measurements and a tremendous amount of fact finding varied from the important to the trivial" (a)

But what has been the net result of such a large-scale undertaking and colossal effort inspired by faith in the efficacy of money, machinery and methodology ?

FAILURE ON THE INTELLECTUAL SIDE.

"There has been no respectable achievement even in the subjects offered in the secondary school curricula." *** "A seventy percent. achievement in Mathematics is not respectable in schools". *** "A smattering of modern foreign languages" "is not respectable". *** "42·5 percent. of the students who elected French have dropped the study by the end of one year and 79·5 per cent. by the end of two". *** "In Latin the results are as bad." *** "After a year of ancient or of American history half the students are unable to tell who Solon was or to define Monroe Doctrine". *** "In English" "abundant evidence exists that there has resulted in the majority of students no permanent taste for what is called standard literature". *** "Book reports that when 900 fresh men at Indiana University were tested on an assigned passage of English prose on which they had two days' study, only 27 per cent. of the boys and 39 per cent. of the girls could give the title of the chapter or formulate in any terms the chief problem discussed by the author".

(a) Thomas H. Briggs : *The Great Investment ;* (*Inglis Lecture 1930*) *p. 117.*

*** "The results of written English are in a large fraction of cases shocking".[a]

FAILURE TO CREATE PERMANENT INTERESTS IN EDUCATION.

And it is not only in administering the traditional training that they have failed to achieve 'respectable' results. They have failed equally in developing the natural aptitudes of the students or in creating any lasting desire for knowledge. In the same lecture we find it stated :

"Evidence is found finally in the large number of men and women who on leaving school drop with relief and with finality all concern with subjects to which they have devoted months and even years of time. This results from failure to develop appetites and desires that insure a continuance of vocational or avocational activities. Too often, far too often, education comes to be considered something that is completed under compulsion and constant direction, instead of something that continues unendingly to make life more interesting and more intelligible"[b]

FAILURE TO PREVENT MORAL ABERRATIONS.

Again, the failure is not confined to the intellectual side only. It is as much, if not more, evident on the moral side as well. "A few years ago the principal of the Lawrenceville school", (New Jersey) "one of the most important boys' preparatory schools, wrote a letter to the parents of all students calling their attention to the prevalence of drinking among school boys everywhere".[c] "No petting party, no redhouse toot, no joy ride far from the prying eye of Main Street, is complete", we are given to understand, "unless the boys carry flasks".[d] "I personally talked with fortyone boys from one certain high school", says Judge Lindsay, "all but three or four of these had been in the forbidden district". He made a similar investigation in

(*a*) *Ibid pp. 124-28.* (*b*) *Ibid p. 135.*
(*c*) Judge Ben. B. Lindsay and W. Evans : *The Revolt of Modern Youth p. 52.* (*d*) *Ibid. p. 51*

a larger school with no better results.[a] Again, he says "boys brought before me for theft come for the most part from the best day schools, the best Sunday schools, and many of them from boys' organisations that are nationally known".[b]

In making these quotations and presenting a picture of the failure of the current system of education in a highly progressive country, it is not our object to palliate the defects that have come to prevail in the present system of education in our land, although we must say that we have particular reasons to be grateful to our inherited ancient culture that on the moral side we have been able to avoid so far the regrettable breakdown that the above quotations indicate to have taken place in Miss Mayo's own country.

YET NO MOVEMENT TO REDUCE SCHOOLS BUT DEMANDS FOR DEEPER TREATMENT.

Nor have we heard as yet that they in America faced with such grievous failures have called a conference to bring down the number of schools or reduce the size of the doors leading to the Universities. Not a quack's remedies they seek. On the contrary, their experts come forward with demands for the formulation of a clear and comprehensive philosophy of education, for necessary changes in the curricula and the programme, for a closer analysis of the needs of the socio-economic environment, and for a more vital integration of the thoughts and activities within and outside the schools. Can we, therefore, afford to ignore all such positive ideas of advance, all such serious efforts at reconstruction, and hope to gain our ends by harping on the poverty of equipment and paraphernalia and making much of what is comparatively of small importance ?

In this connection we are reminded of a charge that is now oftener levelled against the Bengal high schools. It is

(a) *Ibid. p. 68*
(b) *Ibid. p. 97*

THE CHARGE OF EMPLOYMENT OF UNTRAINED TEACHERS EXAMINED.

remarked that these schools in Bengal employ lesser number of trained teachers than those of the sister provinces are doing in their comparatively new venture ; and it is repeated without remembering that the teachers' training institutions in Bengal may be considered infant institutions in comparison with the age of many of the high schools. To suggest that there can be no sound teaching except by teachers who have come out of these young institutions is to make a reckless insinuation not altogether free from anachronism. Nor is it a good defence of the cause of the 'trained' teachers to say "that the trained teacher is at present not doing all one might expect simply because he is isolated". If at present "there are only about two trained graduates to three high schools", and if "at the present rate of progress, it will be ten years before each high school can be supplied with one other B.T. and forty years before half the graduates in schools can be trained",[a] then it is hardly possible to return to the charge in all seriousness. We are not anxious to deny the better knowledge of the science of teaching that the B. T.'s may possess, we are rather inclined to welcome more facilities for teachers' training than are available at the present moment, particularly in scientific, technical and vocational subjects and not disregarding moral subjects to be sure ; but can anyone say that in so far teaching is an art you can only learn *about* it and not acquire it 'on the work' ? Moreover, every country with a long tradition of successful teaching work must have a method of its own and it is not rational to deny it simply because those who have greater interest in the importation of new methods do not take sufficient care to explore, analyse, and systematise our indigenous methods.

(a) *Eighth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in Bengal (1927-32) p. 104.*

A PLEA FOR DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS METHOD.

Indeed, "the history of Hindu pedagogy presents a vast field to be explored", and it is not altogether the history of a long-lost art. Not to speak of more ancient times, a few centuries ago, Vachaspati Misra (1150 A.D.) anticipated, as Mr. Mazumdar has shown, 'the Dewey steps.'[a] And even in the early British period this country had not only a sufficient but exportable proficiency in the art of teaching. "Very few in India know," says Major B. D. Basu, "that the system of 'mutual tuition'—which has been practised by Indian school-masters since time immemorial—has been borrowed by the christian countries of the west from India. The man who first introduced it into Great Britain was a native of Scotland by the name of Dr. Andrew Bell".[b] Method has surely an importance of its own but the method of approaching the human mind and eliciting the desired response must vary with the external requirements and internal 'thought-structure', as also with the ideal of education pursued in different countries. That accounts for the fact why one nation has a partiality for the Herbartian 'formal steps' and another favours the Dalton plan and why, again, a third prefers the Kilpatrick Project method.

WHAT IS REQUIRED ABOVE ALL IN A MAKER OF FUTURE INDIA.

But, whatever may be the method, the essential requirements for success must be the earnestness with which it is pursued and its adaptability towards the purpose to be achieved. All the same, as Sister Nivedita reminded us years ago, "he who carries the torch of modern knowledge to the India of the future" must "be one who feels himself enfranchised of the whole greatness of Indian spirituality". "Even in science it will only be those men who believe themselves to be inheriting and working out the greatest

(a) N. N. Mazumdar : *A History of Education in ancient India* pp. 77-78.

(b) *Education in India under E. I. Company p. 12.*

ideals of the Indian past, who will be able to lay one stone in the edifice of the national future—if there is to be such an edifice at all." Only for the writer of the History of Hindu Chemistry it has been possible to be the founder of a modern school of Indian chemists. For, even if the subject be modern and the terminology foreign, the devotion that creates, and the dedication that inspires will have to "be Indian and know themselves for Indian."

CHAPTER XVII.

REAL DEFECTS AWAITING REAL REMEDIES.

THE EXISTING SYSTEM IS NOT SURELY FREE FROM DEFECTS.

From what we have written if any one comes to conclude that in our view the system of high school education that prevails in Bengal is an ideal one and the schools are all, without exception, perfect patterns of what high schools should be, then we must say that such a conclusion is absolutely unwarrantable. Beyond attacking the official arguments that have been advanced to give the high schools a bad name for closing many of them down, we have said nothing that can justify the aforesaid conclusion. Indeed, no one who has direct acquaintance with these institutions and their problems, can ever claim that the current system of high school education is free from all and even grave defects. But while these defects remain unattended to, and are even suffered to continue, those with which the existing high schools are officially and generally charged are either misconceived or mainly due to causes over which the institutions and their local management have little control. And hence the remedies that are officially suggested to purge the system of the alleged defects are not measures likely to make it sound, but are rather calculated to cripple the organisation and curtail even its existing beneficence.

The high schools in Bengal, let us recognise the fact in all humility, are not in all cases financially strong to render first class service, or evenly distributed from the

point of view of area or population ; but if it be remembered that these institutions arose out of local necessity, initiative, and enterprise, yet without any local authority to come to their help with compulsory levy of local rates, if it be remembered again that these institutions came into existence not in accordance with a preconceived state plan, and mostly even without state aid, then the official reviewers in their destructive attitude can hardly establish a just claim to be heard. Even if in some cases, which must be very few in number, these schools may be amalgamated to bring into existence institutions more healthy and resourceful, the defect in distribution can be sufficiently cured not by any large scheme of abolition but by a well-conceived plan of starting new institutions in backward areas, as the Hartog Committee suggested, and the Punjab Government, in particular, have been doing in their own province. If the Government of Bengal are unable to do it in their present financial position, the question of uneven distribution cannot be legitimately raised but has to be dropped at the present moment, and such funds as are available now should go to financially improve the existing schools. Because it is not possible "to provide facilities for high school education in every village" [(a)], because the Government cannot find sufficient funds to help and strengthen the "existing institutions," therefore high schools should be as few and out of common reach as possible is a proposition obviously fallacious, if not fatuous in the extreme, and its reactionary character needs no emphasis "at a time when all the leading countries of the world are seeking to increase opportunities for the education of their adolescents beyond the elementary stage."

REDUCTION NOT A JUSTIFIABLE BUT A REACTIONARY STEP

But we shall be immediately confronted with the

(a) *Vide the argument in the Notes circulated at the Conference*

question : what in our opinion, then, are the defects of the system of high school education that prevails in Bengal and how do we propose to cure them ? We shall attempt to answer the first part of the question, and in doing so suggest by implication the remedies *enpassant*, for an adequate answer to the second part will require at least as big an essay as the present one, and we do not propose to travel so much beyond the limited objects of this book.

INITIAL NECESSITY : FREEDOM FROM FITFUL AND ABRUPT CHANGES OF POLICY.

Any one acquainted with our educational system is aware that there is no continuity of policy in the administration of secondary education in general. Rather it suffers from abrupt and rapid changes of policy. If, until yesterday, expansion of facilities for such education was considered eminently desirable, to-day contraction comes to be the coveted keynote. At one moment development of M. E. Schools into High Schools is encouraged, at the next moment the cry for a large reduction in the number and status of the latter is raised. Now M. E. Schools are considered the chief desiderata, then comes the cry for M. V. Schools. Connection and continuity between the high and the middle stages are sometimes deemed indispensable, at a not very distant hour dissociation of the two stages is found to be imperatively necessary ; and the surgical operation can even brook no delay. While there is no end of doubts about introducing vernacular medium in the high stage, notwithstanding the assurance that the teaching of English will be strengthened, almost simultaneously it is canvassed that English, not as a medium but even as a subject of study, should find no place in the middle stage. Not long ago private enterprise in education was a matter for appreciation and encouragement, now it was not only to be repressed but, if possible, swept away.

One report stresses that political franchise cannot be extended to those who have not passed at least the U. P. standard but, before the ink is dry on it, so to speak, another seriously suggests that the progress of democracy in India demands that the best way to educate the masses and create leadership in rural areas will be to devise a middle-stage education from which English—that is, the language in which the business of the legislatures and even that of the district boards have to be transacted and their proceedings published—should be excluded. What, therefore, is necessary at the outset, if our educational endeavours are to be productive of better results, is that they should be freed from subjection to fitful, and even capricious, changes in policy shaped by men who care more for administration than for education and are more concerned in calling the tune than in paying the piper.

THE FOREIGN MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION.

Coming to the educational programme itself, the first and foremost defect that has attracted the attention of all who have come to examine it seriously is the unnatural vehicle—the foreign medium—through which instruction is given even in the high school stage. Since the inception of the movement for national education as a part of the 'swadeshi movement' in the first decade of this century, Indian leaders, extremist as well as moderate, have been particularly at pains to revive the criticism and point out this great anomaly in our educational system. But the authorities will hardly pay any heed to it. Whether it is true or not, as Major B. D. Basu says, that in the first half of the last century "the Anglicists made English the medium of instruction for Indian scholars to prevent the cultivation of Indian vernaculars and thus of Indian nationality," "to feed and augment English interests and to direct the ideas and sympathies of the natives towards

their present rulers" [a], the indifference, which neither the efforts of the Vernacular Society (in 1851) nor the evidence of men like Sir Frederick Halliday and Mr. J. C. Marshman before the Select Committee of the House of Commons (in 1853) could shake, continued unchanged even when half a century afterwards the demand for vernacular medium was emphasized by men like Sir Gurudas Banerjee and Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore. In vain the Calcutta University Commission recommended "a reduction of the use of English as a medium of instruction in high schools," and equally in vain the Calcutta University "decided" so far back as in 1922, as one of its Ex-Chancellors points out, "on the introduction of the vernacular as the medium of instruction." [b] In fact, the doubts and irresolution in higher quarters have been so unyielding in this matter that even today, nearly twelve years after the date of the aforesaid decision of the Calcutta University, the school students travail on as before. The evil of 'the unique experiment' of giving education through the medium of a foreign language that the author of 'The Heart of Aryavarta' could not undo as the head of the administration continued only to attract subsequently his lordship's comment as an author.

(A CONFUSION TO BE AVOIDED)

Here, in passing, we should point out the confusion that is often made between English as the medium of instruction and English as a language for study. The one is a great handicap while the other is a necessary help. Education to be real, to help understanding, to unfold the mind and promote self-expression, can only be given through the mother tongue of the persons receiving it, but one foreign language, if not more, has to be a necessary

(a) *Education in India under E. I. Company, p. 114.*

(b) Earl of Ronaldshay (now Marquess of Zetland) : *The Heart of Aryavarta. p. 33.*

part of the school curriculum in modern times. To omit such an element in the preparatory stage of life will be to ill-equip students not only for higher education and reception of wider information and knowledge but for the growing struggle for existence of the nation as well. Reactionaries only can contemplate such a course of education for our secondary school boys only to condemn them to the lives of wellfrogs. Such reactionaries can be found not only among Indians but also among Britishers in India. Men who in their own insular home consider French and other modern languages an essential part of the school curriculum seriously put forward the suggestion that English should be discarded as a subject for study in our middle school stage. When such propositions are advanced with the insistence on retaining English as the medium of instruction in our higher education, the contradiction can only serve to present the objects underlying them in a clearer light.

ITS NARROW SCOPE.

The next great defect in our educational programme is its narrow scope, based as it is on a severely sectional view of the mind. It addresses itself principally to the intellect and is almost wholly informational in character. The purpose of education is surely to inform the mind and enlarge understanding ; that is so well recognised that we for ourselves are not going either to deny or belittle it, suffering as we have been from a lack of informational knowledge. But what is little recognised in the current programme is that the purpose of education must be to enrich sentiments and widen sympathies as well. It is a truism that, with the training of the intellect, the training of the feelings has to be recognised as an important part of education in the early years of life if the mental diet is not to suffer from a lack of necessary vitamins. But

whether it is ignored here because feelings can start with the home and the home land, and art has to begin with what is local, it is more than we can say. 'To feel nobly,' 'to choose loftily,' to make serious and sustained endeavours must be the message of all real education in the formative period of life if man has not to sink back into animality. While few will dare deny it in theory, there is, again, hardly anything to show in the scheme of instruction approved and enforced here, that education ought to be most concerned with shaping the attitude and the will to higher purposes, and that its object, at any rate, must be to inspire self-conscious activity with a clear conception of values, and to ensure a life thoughtfully lived amidst all stress and strain. The result is that in respect of the adolescents our present educational activity suffers from the same defect that pervades mere 'bookish education' wherever it prevails. As distinguished educationists in the new world now admit :

"Text books have been constructed in mere informational terms ; teaching activities have been formulated with the express purpose of drilling these terms into the students ; administrative functions have been developed that place a premium upon teaching which successfully fixes the terms, and our scientific development in the field of the measurement of results has glorified both the administrator and the teacher whose activities bring large masses of students quickly up to the informational levels which the tester, assuming that informational accumulations set the ends of education, has established. All of this may be splendid for the administrators and thrilling for the tester, but we are beginning to realise, what we should always have known, that it is deadening and fruitless for both the student and the teacher [a].

While on the one hand such is the case, on the other,

(*a*) Prof. Hullfish in *The Educational Frontier. Ch. V. pp. 171-172.*

"Comes into play the fallacy of psychologies which try to build a whole out of an aggregation of specific but isolated parts. Basic appetites are left undisciplined even though the motto of this type of school practice is 'discipline.' The deeper and more inclusive drives and moving forces are not cultivated and hence find accidental and unregulated outlet. The social effect is that youth having an unusual amount of untrained energy to dispose of fall readily into careers of revolt and potential crime ; those with more moderate equipment become a ready prey to external stimulations. They grow into seekers after dissipation and excitement in order to obtain a stimulation of a fulfilment of themselves which is denied them in the monotony of routine occupations." [a]

(*a*) Profs. Dewey and Childs in *The Educational Frontier. Ch. IX. pp. 301-302.*

CHAPTER XVIII

REAL DEFECTS AWAITING REAL REMEDIES *(Contd.)*

NOT 'LIFE-REGARDING'

Not a less remarkable defect of the current programme is its utter indifference to our life and surroundings. It is not 'life-regarding' and it has the least reference to our socio-economic environment. Yet education to be successful and effective must demand that the programme should be framed with the fullest consideration for all these. How little such considerations are made here in organising the school and the curricula will be apparent if the broad fact be not missed that students in Calcutta have to go through the same courses as students in the rural areas—courses equally colourless and impartial in the matter of creating bias either for rural life and industries or for urban concerns and endeavours. At most half a dozen out of about 750 rural high schools have been helped to make arrangement for agricultural training and a point of unenviable distinction for the province is that it has no agricultural college—no provision for higher studies in agriculture and rural reorganisation—which can turn out teachers capable of teaching the subject in keeping with the humanistic pragramme of the high schools. Neither does the educational programme in the towns include any such training as promotes interest in trade and commerce. And common to all there is the supreme and universal disregard for the life that is generally lived, for the social

environment from which the child emerges, for the cultural *milieu* which conditions his personality. There is nothing in the teaching imparted to help the boys' reconciliation with the very human institutions and the organic wholes in which he grows and develops. No serious effort is made to make the boy a better member of the family in which he is born, of the community whose life he shares, of the country of which he is the product. Disruption of the family, deterioration of the native culture, and gradual passing away of all truly national sentiments that can "provide home to our rule," if and when obtained, are the results. Decade after decade such results have been witnessed, if not welcomed, in growing proportions and now it is questioned why the present system of education is not leading to better adjustment of the young learner with the real world around him, why life is ebbing away from the villages, why the English-educated rural people swell the number of the unemployed in the towns, why education is not ensuring the development of true character, as if it was ever the serious concern of persons in control of the educational policy and programme to promote 'orientation' and help 'integration'.

THE WRONG ASSUMPTION ABOUT THE LEARNER'S MIND ON WHICH THE WHOLE EDUCATION PROGRAMME IS BASED; THE VERY FOUNDATION OF ETHICS IGNORED.

A deeper, though a kindred, defect again is that our education proceeds on the assumption that the mind of the Indian boy is either a 'tabula rasa' or a lumber room of superstitious tendencies and ideas. He has either to be educated on the footing of a 'mere individual' by instilling everything imported from without, or trained out of his inherited traits and traditional thought-structures.

"The individual man, the man into whose essence his community with others does not enter, who does not include relation to others in his very being, is we say, a fiction." "Physiology would tell us, in one language or another, that

even" "at his birth" "the child's mind is no passive 'tabularasa' he has an inner, a yet undeveloped nature, which must largely determine his future individuality. What is this inner nature? Is it particular to himself? Certainly not all of it, will have to be the answer. The child is not fallen from heaven. He is born of certain parents who come from certain families, and has in him the qualities of his parents, and, as breeders would say, of the strains of both sides." "On the descent of mental qualities, modern investigation and popular experience" "altogether I believe support one another" * * * "But the child is not merely the member of a family and (passing over the subordinate wholes, which nevertheless do in many cases qualify him) he is born a member of the English nation." "It is, I believe, a matter of fact that at birth the child of one race is not the same as child of another." [a] * * *

"In short, man is a social being; he is real only because he is social, and can realize himself only because it is as social that he realizes himself. The mere individual is a delusion of theory; and the attempt to realize it in practice is the starvation and mutilation of human nature, with total sterility or the production of monstrosities." [b]

What Bradley says will perhaps be acknowledged at once as true of Englishmen, but in respect of Indians that will hardly be recognised as the correct foundation for moral training. The Indian ideas of *'Sanskara'* and *'Swadharma'* can only be scouted as antiquated fads, otherwise the non-Indian authority to direct our education has to yield; and so all the risk of "starving and mutilating human nature" has to be taken; and if "sterility and monostrosities" are produced, then departments other than that in charge of education may be safely left to deal with them without any loss of prestige to the directors of our education, but laying all blame at the door of local management, of course if non-official, although such

(*a*) F. H. Bradley: *Ethical Studies. 168-69*
(*b*) *Ibid p. 174*

management is limited only to well-defined administrative matters.

NEGLECT OF ETHICAL TRAINING.

Quite in keeping with the disregard for the foundation of ethics is the neglect of ethical training itself. The great disparity between the intellectual and the moral advances of mankind, to which are attributed many of the evils of the modern world, is not only engaging the serious attention of responsible leaders of thought in all progressive countries, but is spurring on educational reformers to greater efforts for bringing moral education into a line with intellectual training. "It is here the work of the Moral Education League has been specially important." "Carefully graduated syllabuses have been prepared by the League and widely accepted by educational authorities." While the Sadler Report made in England showed what efforts were being made in various countries towards this end, the following provision found its place in the Code of the Education Board in England :

"Moral Instruction should form an important part of every Elementary school curriculum. Such instruction may either (1) be incidental, occasional, and given as fitting opportunity arises in the ordinary routine of lessons, or (2) be given systematically and as a course of graduated instruction.

"The subject of this instruction, whether given by the methods indicated in (1) or in (2) above, should be on such points as courage, truthfulness, cleanliness of mind, body, and speech ; the love of fair play, gentleness to the weaker, humanity to animals, temperance, self-denial, love of one's country and respect for beauty in nature and in art.

"The teaching should be brought home to the children by reference to their actual surroundings in town or country, and should be illustrated as vividly as possible by stories, poems, quotations, proverbs and examples drawn from history and biography.

"The object of such instruction being the formation of

character and habits of life and thought an appeal should be made to the feelings and the personalities of the children. Unless the natural moral responsiveness of the child is stirred, no Moral Instruction is likely to be fruitful."

Here, in this country, where education in the past meant above all the training of the will, men like Sir Gurudas Banerjee, have been at pains to point out the great necessity for moral instructions, but one will look in vain for even a parallel provision or programme showing some recognition of the importance of moral instruction in the scheme of boys' education in this province.

ENTIRE OMISSION OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

But the greatest of all defects is the omission of religious education in any shape or form in a country where religion is regarded as 'the value of values'—"in a land where all procedure and institutions from birth ceremonies to inheritance after death are based on religion." The scripture has its due place in the preparatory schools of the British boys, the chapel in their public schools (along with military training, of course,) but religion in India has to wait outside the school-gates and can find no admission within. The principle of religious neutrality makes not only creedal and doctrinal religion but even spiritual education a trespasser within her present-day educational institutions. India is perhaps the only country whose history can be written from the dawn of human civilisation to the day of her present struggles in terms of the rise of her great spiritual giants and varied religious philosophies, yet her saints and philosophers appear to have lived and preached in vain so far as her current educational programme and the instructions received by the generality of her school population are concerned. But what is still more strange is that the very principle of religious neutrality, which is alleged to be responsible for the continued lock-out of all indigenous religious influences, creates no bar to the teaching of the

Bible; for we have Mr. Mayhew's admission that "India owes the Bible to schools and colleges that have grown out of British rule in India," [a] When such is the case, can there be any justification for the superficial comment: "Ask any intelligent history graduate for a statement of the principles at issue in England of the seventeenth century and he will give them to you clearly and correctly. But they mean nothing to him. Ask him for a statement of his caste-customs and obligations, or for a reasoned account of the objects and modes of worship in the locality, and he will be silent or amazingly confused and rambling in his exposition?" [b] Or, can there be any matter for surprise if the Bengali student knows more about Christ and his teachings than of Chaitanya and his preachings, not to speak of the earlier exponents of India's undying religious spirit?

A QUESTION ANSWERED: A CONCLUSION EXAMINED.

Here, we have to face an inevitable question and a suggested conclusion. The question is: how can arrangement be made for instructions in religious subjects in a country so cut up by creeds, especially when in this respect the demands of the Hindus and those of the Muslims are bound to be different? In the first place, it may be said at once that when the various Hindu sects draw their spiritual inspiration from the same source, there can be no serious difficulty in framing a course of religious instruction on the basis of the ancient and universally respected sources of Indian spiritual thought and on that of the great national epics. About a quarter of a century ago Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, reminding us that only a few countries were blessed with great epics, remarked that if we were to avoid the deleterious influence of a factory atmosphere and the divorce between the masses and the intelligentsia our

(a) Arthur Mayhew: *The Education of India*. *p. 185*

(b) *Ibid p. 182*

school curricula could not be indifferent to the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. [a] Moreover, among the Hindus there is a real regard for genuine religious experiences as revealed in the lives and the teachings of great religious personalities, whatever may be the parts of the country in which they have arisen and the sects they have inaugurated. For it cannot be denied that from the time of the Bhagavad Gita to that of Ramkrishna Paramhamsa the Hindus have been accustomed to think of even diverse religions and differing creeds as but so many paths and approaches to Divinity appropriate to different peoples.

Nor need the Hindu-Moslem question present an insuperable difficulty in this matter. If the demands for different classics and second languages could be fostered and met by separate arrangements in the same institutions, there could be no reason why similar arrangements for respective religious instructions might not easily be made and even opportunities for a mutual "creative understanding" be offered in such matters. If, again, "Islam in India bears the impress of its surroundings" and "if spiritually and emotionally the Muhammedan student is far closer to the Hindu than to the English student," then surely it should not be impossible to promote such an understanding. Admittedly there is better understanding through unity of interests among the uneducated masses of Hindus and Muhammedans ; but if education throws them apart and leads the latter to be more at home in the Pan-Islamic world, who will venture to affirm that our education proceeds on right lines or to establish the Indian character and outlook of what is available in our schools and colleges ?

(a) Vide Tagore's forewords to Rai Bahadur Dinesh Chandra Sen's *Ramayanee Katha* and to late Mr. Jogindra Nath Basu's *Saral Krittibas.*

In these circumstances, to attempt to draw the conclusion that "the spirit of Christ, and his spirit only, will eventually remove the cultural antagonism on which all claims to spiritual monopolies are based" [a] can only be claiming another spiritual monopoly in a country that knew not at least the religious persecutions and the cultural vendetta of the west and never identified learning with heresy. The non-proselytising Indian mind can surely appreciate with genuine reverence the spirit and the message of Christ as revealed on the Cross, the Sermon on the Mount may easily find itself at home in the land covered by the Rock Edicts of Asoke and the foot prints of Jain and Vaisnav saints, but, in a country where men are more accustomed to walk by their faith than to do propaganda about it, they may be curious to know how the spirit and the message of the Prince of peace after they have been imbibed for eighteen centuries, could not save the west from the catastrophe of a Great war (which, again, was not surely going to be the last of its kind,) nor save India from witnessing the latest instance of how "the cross moves east" with a stupendous and tragic failure to bring about the desired change of heart. Moreover, when "the spirit of Christ" is yet a matter of speculation in the west, when even recent interpreters like Gore and Inge cannot agree regarding its implications, when "the church of spirit" can admittedly claim only a few adherents in the Christendom, and the religion officially associated with His great name "no longer attracts those who are shaping the thought of our time," [b] can we not be suffered to be saved by our own ancient heritage? Again, "if we compare early western thought with early oriental thought we still find that two opposite conceptions of the universe

(*a*) Arthur Mayhew : *The Education of India. p. 185*

(*b*) Dean Inge : *Christian Ethics and Modern Problems. p. 383*

characterize them. On the one hand there is the Voice proclaiming on the banks of the Ganges: 'They who see but one, in all the changing manifoldness of this universe, unto them belongs Eternal Truth—unto none else, unto none else.' And on the other, the tendency, going back to Greek thought, to divide and sub-divide, to form compartments and to define categories, to insist on distinctions which differentiate rather than on an underlying oneness which unites." [a] When such is the case, when the principle of 'multiple unity' realised and uttered millennia ago can serve to tune up not only a poet's lute to-day, but can help even the doyen of Indian scientists to transcend his Cambridge education and present the vision of 'life's unity and rhythm,' can we not be spared in matters of religion and culture to stew in our own juice? Here at least Indians believe (and believe on substantial evidence) they have a sufficient supply not only for home consumption but for export as well. All they want is that they should not be kept unaware of their ancient and ageless resources in what now go by the name of their educational institutions. If the present system is incapable of producing a Sankar, a Kabir, a Chaitanya, or a Ramakrishna—and it may be admitted to be doubtful whether any current system can produce them—let it not take pride at least in continuing to turn out men and women who are becoming more and more incapable of even entering into their spirits, or who, if they at all wish to re-educate themselves on the basis of their own culture, will have to learn second-hand 'What India can teach us.'

* * * * *

In his study of 'The Heart of Aryavarta' a distinguished Ex-Governor of Bengal raised the crucial question:

(a) Collum: *The Dance of Çiva p. 19*

"Whether India has the will to persist as a distinctive type among the races of the world or whether she will be content to merge her individuality in the virile type which has been evolved in the Western hemisphere?"[a] . But from where can the answer to such a vital question come except from the educational institutions of the country ? Yet, what answer can our schools possibly return if, under the control and direction of men who have no faith in India's greatness, they are called upon to make only a Hobson's choice, ignoring the religion and the culture, the ethics and the art, the economics and the environment which because of our very birth and inheritance we have to call our own ?

(*a*) Earl of Ronaldshay (now Marquess ol Zetland): *The Heart of Aryavarta, p. 26.*

CHAPTER XIX

CLOSING WORDS.

THE HIGH SCHOOL ORGANISATION IS NEVERTHELESS A MATTER OF PRIDE FOR BENGAL.

With all these outstanding defects in the system of secondary education in our country, the high school organisation in Bengal is nevertheless a matter of pride for this province. It is an institution built up in a very large measure by the enterprise and sacrifice of the people of Bengal. Its advanced position in India is due not so much to state help, nor to the endeavours of statutory local authorities or self-governing bodies, as to public, that is non-official, initiative and enthusiasm and individual contribution and help in the shape of benefactions and fees. To the silent and ungrudging service of unambitious men—the school teachers—it owes more than to any overhead direction or supervision. It is a monument of great voluntary effort on the part of a poor people though rendered under a scheme not framed by the people nor for a programme entirely of their choice.

There was a time, not surely distant, when the movement for starting high schools received official encouragement and state support, however limited, when it was believed in official quarters too that to open a school was to omit a jail. Even until recent times the movement continued to receive the first if not the second. State aid, however, could not keep pace with popular endeavours; the amount on the whole might have increased but it dwindled in proportion to the growth of the institution as a whole and eventually came to be hopelessly inadequate to the

requirements of the province. The cry of nation-building notwithstanding, the transference of Education has hardly changed the outlook of the Treasury which here more than anywhere else "cares little for Education and much for economy at least in certain directions."

A MONUMENT OF GREAT VOLUNTARY EFFORT AND SACRIFICE ON THE PART OF THE PEOPLE.

The benefits of modern education once realised, the people, however, proceeded to make larger and yet larger provision for their children. Where the state was unable to provide even for universal primary education what else could the people do but depend mostly on their unaided effort in the matter of provision for high schools? Almost all the risk of new experiments, nearly all the burden of starting new schools in the higher secondary sphere, they undertook without any authority derived from the state to raise necessary funds, without even any right to demand from the state any fraction of the money raised and spent by them. Without compulsory rates, without statutory provision of state support, England cannot do even in the twentieth century.[a] Without any such rates, without any promise of help from the national exchequer, Bengal extended and still extends, her higher secondary education, and that in the face of hostile criticism and of public denial that "no aid was to be given to any school unless its permanency was assured.".

(*a*) Regarding the position in England Mr. Bolton King states in his *Schools of Today* :—

"We must have a clear view of the existing system. The cost of education, as of other social services, is shared between the National Exchequer and the rates of particular district The Local Authority fixes the expenditure in its area, subject to the Board of Education's controlling power, and claims back a certain definite percentage from the Board. For higher education this percentage was fixed by the Act of 1902 at 50, exclusive of the Residue ("Whisky money") Grant, which was appropriated for the purpose as early as 1890. But in addition the Board pays a considerable sum in direct grant to many secondary schools, and this in practice goes to the relief of the local rate."

* * *

"The system of proportionate grants was deliberately adopted to encourage progress. When a Local Authority knows that it can count on a refund of about half of any new expenditure, it is more likely to incur that expenditure, and in fact a vast new expenditure has been incurred."

Where is the Bengalee who cares for the educational advancement of his people that will not feel concerned over the prospect of destruction of much of the system so laboriously built up by generations of sacrifice and service ?

HOW CAN IT CONTINUE AS A GREAT DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTION.

But, whatever may be the reason for our anxiety, we can yet maintain the natural and self-regulated growth of our higher secondary education if we are prepared to make larger sacrifice to strengthen the financial position of our schools and can attract a greater spirit of service in the sacred cause of education of our children. Our schools are bound to be poorer institutions in comparison with those of the richer countries, they may not afford the luxurious appointments of the latter, but let it not be said against any one of them that it is inefficient through lack of funds necessary for pure educational purposes. Our standard of equipments and expenditure cannot possibly be linked either to the sterling or the dollar, all the same we have to remember that if our high school system is to continue as a great democratic institution within the reach of many and under popular control and management it can do so only if every unit of this great institution can win the best support in men and money from the locality it stands to serve.

THE REPROACH TO BE REMOVED AND THE DANGER THAT IS TO GO.

But, apart from the reproach of poverty that we have to remove to the best of our ability, there is another stigma which has to be wiped off the high schools of this province—whether unaided or aided and not excluding even the Government high schools altogether. The terrorist movement has been responsible for many a misfortune of this province, but the injury that it has done to the reputation of her high schools is not the least of the disservice it has done to her. Its reprehensible attempt to extend the recruiting field into the sacred precincts of educational institutions meant for immature young people and boys of tender

years is worthy of the severest condemnation indeed. Not only parents and guardians but every human consideration must demand that children and boys should enjoy security in all conceivable circumstances and most so while receiving their early education and training. The evil design that will infect them with germs of murderous ideas undoubtedly deserve execration from all right-minded men. As the parents and guardians of boys can only regard with the greatest abhorrence and dismay the ogres' policy of the terrorists to eat up, as it were, the very vitals of the young boys, it behoves the managing committees of schools, and more particularly the teachers who have direct charge of the boys and immediate contact with them, to be on the alert and to take all necessary precautions in keeping the school area and atmosphere immune from terrorist propaganda and influence. Dark designs and subtle propaganda working underground it may be no easy task to counter, internal immunity may not be gained unless and until the inherent defects in the scheme of education have been remedied, but the co-operation of the guardians and the teachers and their combined and watchful care in and outside the school can do much to ward off this great danger to the future hopes of our province. That co-operation and vigilance will have to be achieved and exerted in the best interests of our own boys, and if our boys are the very dearest to us our solicitude for their welfare should prove stronger and more effective than the concern which others may feel for our children from different considerations. And with essential expenditure and service secured, with the defects in the curricula and programme remedied, with moral security unimpaired and strengthened, there is no reason why the system will not be able to prove its worth better in future than it has been possible for it to do hitherto.

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